







EDUCATION THROUGH RECREATION

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Education through Recreation  
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*By the Same Author*

THE EDUCATION OF THE WHOLE MAN

THE LEGENDS OF SMOKEOVER

THE HEROES OF SMOKEOVER

THE CHALLENGE OF LIFE

THE FAITH OF A WORKER

A LIVING UNIVERSE

RELIGIOUS PERPLEXITIES

THE ART OF LIVING TOGETHER

(FIRST PUBLISHED ENTITLED CONSTRUCTIVE  
CITIZENSHIP)

THE INNER SENTINEL

# EDUCATION THROUGH RECREATION

BY  
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Oxford, Editor of the Hibbert Journal*

*"Let us have more joy in life"*

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## PREFACE

THE chapters of this book contain the substance, and some the text, of addresses I have delivered in sixty cities of the United States during the last nine months, under the auspices of the National Recreation Association. A few points will be found repeated, but as they seem to be points which need repetition at the present time I have left them unchanged in correcting the proofs.

My thanks are due to the National Recreation Association, which has given me this opportunity for making contact with some of the most promising currents in contemporary American life ; to the audiences, whose interest in what I have had to say has strengthened my own faith ; and to American friends in many cities for arranging my meetings so admirably and for doing so much to make my tour delightful and instructive.

NEW YORK,  
*June 1932.*





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## Chapter I

### EDUCATION THROUGH RECREATION

THE art of living is one and indivisible. It is not a composite art made up by adding the art of play to the art of work, or the art of leisure to the art of labour, or the art of the body to the art of the mind, or the art of recreation to the art of education. When life is divided into these or any other compartments it can never become an art, but at best a medley or at worst a mess. It becomes an art when work and play, labour and leisure, mind and body, education and recreation, are governed by a single vision of excellence and a continuous passion for achieving it.

A master in the art of living draws no sharp distinction between his work and his play, his labour and his leisure, his mind and his body, his education and his recreation. He hardly knows which is which. He simply pursues his vision of excellence through what-

ever he is doing and leaves others to determine whether he is working or playing. To himself he always seems to be doing both. Enough for him that he does it well.

It is of education and recreation that I am here to speak, though the reader can substitute any other of the pairs of terms I have used above, and reach the same conclusion.

I shall contend that to understand the meaning of education and of recreation we must see the two in union and not in separation. The education which is not also recreation is a maimed, incomplete, half-done thing. The recreation which is not also education has no re-creative value. I doubt if it could even be termed jolly, except perhaps in a fool's paradise, where everything is called by its wrong name and life made intolerable by its "pleasures."

To see education and recreation in their theoretical unity does not carry us very far. What the world needs to-day is their union in *practice*. To bring this to pass two things are necessary.

First the technique. This may be roughly defined as the co-education of mind and body—the technique of training the two as an inseparable unity at every point of their development from childhood onward. This technique was well understood by the Greeks and put into practice with admirable results, the fruits of which we are still reaping in every department of culture. But, under the influence of absurd ideas of the body's inferiority to the mind, this technique was lost, with the result that education came to be regarded as a superior operation performed on the mind and recreation as an inferior process of joyful antics indulged in by the body—the one reserved for the schoolroom and presided over by a person of dignity and consideration, called the "teacher," the other dismissed to the playground and left to the mercies of coaches, gymnasts, muscle-trainers, and drill sergeants retired from the army, with such results as we now see in the disastrous antagonism between culture and athletics prevailing in so many of our schools and colleges,

and in the growing commercialization of sport. Fortunately, the lost technique of co-educating mind and body is now being recovered both in Europe and America and put on a scientific footing. Of this I shall say little in what follows. Enough that it is now available for all educators who would put it into practice.

Even more essential than the technique is the large vision of life as a unitary whole. Man the worker and man the player are not two men, but one. Not two halves of one man, either, but one man viewed in different aspects ; so that if you train him for his work by one method and his play by another, you will find that you are not training *him* at all, but dividing him against himself. So mishandled, he is certain to miss the art of living and find himself in a world of confusion where his duties and his pleasures are in conflict. His leisure occupations will not reinforce his labour occupations, but will disturb them, and his recreation, far from promoting his education, will blot it out.

The synthesis of education and recreation, which is perfectly obvious to any intelligent person who will reflect upon the matter for an hour, is obscured in the minds of the thoughtless multitude by the absurd associations that have gathered around the two words.

Mention the word education and nine out of ten of the hearers will immediately recall their school days. They will remember the "grind" of it all, and a medley of images—textbooks, classrooms, blackboards, courses of lectures, examinations—suffused with memories of boredom, recalcitration, and confinement between walls will rise before the mind. That is what they will understand by "education."

Mention recreation and immediately they will think of joyful escape from all that education means. It will remind them of the happy moment when their education was suddenly stopped at the ringing of the bell and they were sent out to kick up their heels in the playground during the interval of recrea-



tion. Or of the yet happier moment when the term came to an end and the vacation (which means, I suppose, a period of vacancy) gave them an opportunity of drowning their education and all its horrors in oblivion.

Nor are these unfortunate misconceptions confined to the thoughtless multitude. There are eminent pedagogues, not a few, who seem precluded, as by a law of nature, from conceiving that anything can possibly be education unless it is mediated by a book, accepted in a sitting posture, and tested by an examination; or that the function of recreation can be anything else than that of helping the pupil to stretch his limbs, "wholesomely digest his pudding," and so be in better shape for sustaining the persecutions of the classroom, an idea easily detected in the frequent citation, "*mens sana in corpore sano.*"

Of these two misconceptions, the one of education and the other of recreation, I think the first should be considered the parent, and the second the offspring. That being so, I see no prospect of recreation being rightly

understood until we have dismissed the absurd notion of education from which it springs, and so ended the age-long enmity between the pedagogue and his victim. Recreation we shall then see is not an escape from the toil of education into the emptiness of a vacation, but a vitalizing element in the process of education itself. We shall see also that it is a matter of complete indifference whether we speak of "education through recreation" or of "recreation through education." When that point is reached the problem of leisure, as it is called, will solve itself in a flash ; or rather will disappear, for the problem of leisure exists only so long as we think of leisure as a vacation or vacuum separated from the rest of life and needing to be filled with activities specially designed for filling it. In the life of a rightly educated man there is no such vacuum. By combining his education with his recreation we fill up all possible vacuums in advance, and so save nature the trouble of "abhorring" them. For nature's "abhorrence" is not

confined to the vacuums of *space*. It extends to the vacuums of *time*, the leisure of the idle, which Satan has his own way of filling up—as Dr. Watts so sagely reminds us.

Yet, so deeply engrained is our habit of putting recreation into one compartment and education into another, that some difficulties are sure to be encountered in presenting the idea of their indissoluble unity. Perhaps the situation would be eased if people would make a practice of saying re-creation instead of recreation whenever the word had to be used. Were that pronunciation established, nobody would be startled on hearing that a playground is not a space outside the school, but a vital part of its inner structure ; or even that the Christian religion is essentially a *re-creation* movement, and educational for that very reason—an aspect of the matter very beautifully indicated by the music and dancing that wound up the adventures of the prodigal son and gave so much offence to his pedagogically-minded brother.

And here perhaps I may remark that in a

recent symposium, under the caption, "If Christ Should Come To-day," none of the eminent contributors ventures to suggest that Christ, after a preliminary inspection of our strange doings in churches and elsewhere, would soon be finding his way to the children's playgrounds, community centres, and progressive schools, where he would have an encouraging word to say to the men and women (of like mind with his own) who are helping young people to recover the lost radiance of his religion in the joys of creative activity. Instead of this, most of these learned writers represent him as "denouncing" something, such as wealth, war, competition, crooked business, or other iniquity. I think he would leave all that to the authors of the symposium and busy himself, first and last, with re-creation.

## Chapter II

### LEADERSHIP IN RECREATION

WHEN the phrase, "Education for leisure," was first used it was not taken very seriously. Education for leisure was supposed to aim at nothing more than a general brightening up of the playtime of the people, organized games and playing fields for children, more varied and sensible amusements for adults, the provision of good reading for the leisure hours—and so on ; all good things as far as they went, but not going very far below the surface.

I am not sure that I meant much more than this when I first began talking myself about education for leisure. But since then it has come to be recognized that a great deal more is involved than any of us took account of at first. We have seen the leisure of the people increasing, and the prospect is now before us that in the future the total amount of it at the disposal of the community will be far

greater than ever it has been in the past, some authorities going so far as to estimate that, owing to the displacement of human labour by scientific machinery, which is going at a rate that few people realize, a working day of three or four hours is by no means impossible. Even now we are confronted with a staggering amount of what we might call enforced leisure in the shape of unemployment, partly due to the displacement I have just spoken of.

Some of us who have been studying the way the unemployed are spending the blank months when they are out of work have come to the conclusion that our educational system, with its three R's, its system of credits, and all the rest of it, has done very little to prepare those unfortunate millions for the deplorable condition in which they now find themselves. The majority of them are not spending their time either in the cultivation of the soul, or in the cultivation of the body, with which the soul is so intimately connected. With some exceptions, for which God be praised, they are spending their time

in one of two ways ; they are either simply *stagnating*, a term which defines itself, or they are letting themselves be led by the nose into spending both time and money (if they have any of the latter) on ready-made pleasures, of a cheap and sometimes vicious kind. The mental interests which would lead to the cultivation of the soul, the skilled aptitudes which would lead to the cultivation of the body, have not been created or developed by their education. Broadly speaking, their time of unemployment is a time of degeneration. Broadly speaking, the unemployed are as sheep without a shepherd, a multitude at a loose end ; with no initiative or faculty of invention to fill the empty days ; with no skill of their own beyond that which went out of use and began to decay when employment ceased. Is there no call for leadership in that quarter ? Is there no hint here of a neglected aspect of human education ?

You may reply that unemployment is a passing incident in our social history that will

disappear with the revival of trade. I am not so sure of that. One has to think not only of the number of people who are unemployed at any given moment, but of the total amount of "free time" which the community has at its disposal. That total is bound to increase, is increasing at this moment more rapidly than most of us are aware of. The shortening of the hours of necessary labour through the application of science to industry is continually reducing the time that is needed by the struggle for bare existence and increasing the time which people have at their disposal for other purposes—it may be for cultivating their souls or it may be for stagnating and being led by the nose. In that sense unemployment is bound to increase, in the sense, namely, of the total amount of time and energy released from necessary work and left free to play with—and this quite irrespective of any scheme you might adopt for distributing the work that has to be done; for example, by giving everybody an equal share of it.



Our mechanical age has reached a critical turning-point in its history. For a long period the invention of machinery was accompanied by expansion in the field of employment. Instead of making less work, machinery made more. The labour displaced in one quarter was quickly absorbed in another, and more was continually called for. But that process, though it may go on for a long time, cannot go on for ever. Sooner or later a point will be reached when displacement gets ahead of absorption. Assuming the population to remain stationary, the situation can then be met in two ways only—either by reducing the number of workers employed or by reducing the time of their employment. Whichever of the two methods be adopted, the result is the same in the total amount of time unemployed, for obviously, if work has to be found for two million men, it makes no difference, to the total time left over, whether you have one million men unemployed all the day or two million unemployed for half of it. Whether it be true, as

some contend, that the world now carries a surplus population which will have somehow to be reduced before employment can be found for everybody, there can be no doubt that we are now threatened (I use the word advisedly) with a surplus of *time* such as the world has not had before, and of which the present phenomenon of unemployment is a foretaste.

For this vast surplus of leisure time we are not prepared either biologically or by education. Not biologically. Whoever created man, whether you call the creator nature or God, intended him for a busy life of skilful activity and equipped him with faculties for that purpose. For a life of feckless leisure, in the sense of being unemployed, of being at a loose end, of stagnating, of blindly following people who lead you by the nose—for that kind of life man is naturally unfitted and begins to degenerate biologically the moment he falls into it. Four hours' work a day and twenty hours idle, which high authorities are now predicting, sounds rather attractive ;

but nature is against it ; biology forbids it ; the laws of the universe say flatly “ it cannot be.” Rest and refreshment have, indeed, to be provided for ; but *not on that scale* for either rich or poor. The evils of enforced labour—the labour of slaves—we all know. But the evils of enforced leisure, which leaves the masses of the people at a loose end and with nothing worth while to do, are almost as bad, and might be defined as a new form of slavery—slavery to those who lead them by the nose. Is there no call for another kind of leadership at the leisure end of life ?

There is a point about that which I wish to emphasize. Industrial leadership and recreational leadership or, if you like, labour leadership and leisure leadership, these two are intimately connected. They form an inseparable whole. Ideally the two types of leadership should be united in the same person. If that is impossible, they must do their work in understanding and harmony with one another. Otherwise your recreational leader might conceivably become a promoter of

sports and games the effect of which would unfit the worker, either mentally or physically, for his industrial functions ; and the industrial leader, on his part, might be a promoter of work which equally unfits the worker for recreational interests, at least for the higher form of them. Something of the kind has long been going on in our schools and universities, where the athletic interests on games' side is very much at cross purposes with the academic interest on the work side. This must be avoided. The two types of leadership, at the labour end and the leisure end of life, respectively, must act in general harmony.

Labour and leisure are not to be treated as separate departments of life, divided from one another by a high and impenetrable wall. They act and react on one another in manifold ways. On the one hand, the efficiency of the worker is obviously affected by the way he spends his leisure time. If the director of a company is a haunter of night clubs, or a Monte Carlo gambler, let the shareholders

look out for themselves. If the artisan spends his week-end in a debauch, or in attempting some athletic feat beyond his strength, you will know of it on Monday morning. On the other hand, the kind of work he does will have its influence on the kind of pleasure he seeks when work is done. If he leaves off in a state of exhaustion or boredom or nervous irritation, he will naturally seek his recreation in the form of ready-made pleasures and external excitement, and be especially susceptible, as psychologists well know, to that form of entertainment in which the sex flavour is uppermost. It is impossible to say whether the influence of labour on leisure, or of leisure on labour, is the greater. They are what philosophers call "mutually inclusive." They interpenetrate psychologically.

And economically as well. As I have often pointed out, though it is so obvious that anybody can see it for himself, the work that goes on at the labour end of life is largely determined, as to both quality and quantity, by the kind of demand that comes from the lei-

sure end, by the kind of goods and services that people require to keep them amused and happy in their off time. You have only to glance at the goods in the shop windows to see that this is so. If people spend their leisure in playing the fool, people at the labour end will have to furnish them with the means for playing the fool ; industry must play up to that kind of demand, and the goods in the shop windows will tell the tale.

And that of course means the moral interpenetration of the two, as well as the economical. It makes a difference to a man, morally, whether the goods he produces and sells contribute to the worthwhileness of life or not. From that point of view I would rather be engaged in the production of golf-sticks than of lip-sticks, though I dare say lip-sticks are the more profitable of the two. That, however, may be only a personal idiosyncrasy. Taking a broader view, there can be no doubt that a vast difference is made to the morale of an industrial nation, according as the leisure which its industry supports is

wise or foolish. “What is the use of talking to me about the dignity of labour?” said a workman to me once. “What is the use of preaching about my duties to the public when I know very well that the public I am working for are a lot of damn fools?”—and I confess I found the question unanswerable. I asked him, indeed, how he knew that the public was what he said it was, and I was struck by the fact that the proof he gave of the public being “damn fools” consisted entirely of popular leisure amusements, both in his own class and others. I must say that the proof was a good one as far as it went.

Need I add any more to enforce my point that a thorough understanding must exist between the two types of leadership, industrial and recreational? On no account must the two things be allowed to drift apart from one another in the way that mental culture and athletic culture have drifted apart in our schools and universities.

I believe that a beginning in this direction might be made if employers, whenever it is

possible, would establish schools of physical culture in connexion with their works. In the one or two instances of this that I have seen and studied, the results have been most remarkable, psychologically and otherwise.

By physical culture I mean something far more significant than the ordinary procedure of jumping over parallel bars and climbing up ropes ; I mean something which has now become a very beautiful and enjoyable art, founded on a profound understanding of both mind and body, and furnished with a scientific technique of its own. Competent teachers of it are not easily found in this country, though they are more abundant on the continent of Europe. But, seeing how many of our beautiful arts and crafts have been taught us by foreigners, I see no objection to the importation of foreigners for the purpose I have named. We should soon pick it up—as we soon picked up many other things from foreigners. There is in the Anglo-Saxon races a vast reservoir of latent skill, skill in endless variety, as yet unborn or



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unused, but waiting to be developed by anybody who has the wit and the courage to make the attempt, waiting, in fact, for just that type of recreational leadership which I am pleading for. What I now suggest is a beginning.

Wherever experiments of this kind have been tried, their effect might be summed up as a general rise in the level of self-respect, with distinct repercussions all round on work and on play, and especially on sex relations. With this there goes a release of vitality, which becomes available for all sorts of things outside the range of physical culture, and leads to spontaneous demands for those higher cultures which are usually called spiritual. Any employer who finds it possible to act on these lines will be giving a lead in the right direction.

And to give a lead is to be a leader—and the only way of being one. The people who merely talk about these things, as I am doing now, are not the real leaders. The real leaders are the men who *do* them—and I know two or three. We have too much

leadership of the talking kind and too little of the leadership that really leads. What we need in these things is pioneers—and pioneers every time.

I will now direct your attention to the phrase I have been using—"recreational leadership." No type of leadership demands higher gifts—gifts of intellect, of imagination, of human sympathy and understanding. Your recreational leader is more than a games expert, a professional gymnast, or an athletic trainer—though he knows something about all that. Great men, gifted men, bold men, devoted men—and women of the same quality—are needed for the part of recreational leaders. A high university degree is not incompatible with their other qualifications, but their gifts must be higher and more various than those which are indicated by the highest university degree.

For what is recreation? For our present purpose it means what it says. It is the *re-*creation of something that gets damaged in human beings—the repair of human damage

where it is repairable, and the prevention of it in the rising generation. Of this human damage, and this threat of further damage, there is abundance in the modern world. I need only remind you of that enormous class in our massed populations which is known to medical examiners as C. What does the C class consist of? It consists of damaged humanity, and is said to include 60 per cent. of the urban population, some putting it even higher. It is the most numerous class, and it breeds faster than any other—the damaged class. I would ask this question of those of my readers who are engaged in business—how long would you be able to keep out of the bankruptcy court if 60 per cent. of the goods you produce had to be marked “damaged”? Obviously we are here in presence of a great danger, especially when the breeding phenomena are taken into account. That way lies the bankruptcy of civilization.

If now you ask what has done the damage, I am afraid the answer must be that modern civilization has done it. I am no enemy of

civilization ; I hope I am one of its friends. But who can shut his eyes to the fact that our civilization, along with the benefits it confers, has done an enormous amount of damage to mankind ? Fortunately, that is not the end of the story. Just because our civilization has done the damage, it is now up to civilization to undo it where possible—it is not always possible—and to prevent its recurrence in the future. Hence the call for recreational leadership. Wild as the proposition may sound, impossible of attainment as some may deem it, the task before the recreational leader is nothing less than the reconditioning of our damaged populations. Did I not say that bold men were needed to play the part of recreational leaders ?

As to the method of going about it, there is one word, of course, that immediately leaps to the tongue—education. Yes, education is the method—but not the kind of education that now goes by the name. I respect that education for what it is worth, and it is worth a good deal, but a new kind of educa-

tion is called for, which will include what is good in the old, but include many other things now overlooked and neglected.

Various phrases may be used to describe the new kind of education, the kind that is needed for the reconditioning of the people. I am myself in the habit of using three, all of which mean the same thing. Sometimes I call it "the liberal education of the body," which, just because it is liberal, is the education of the mind as well. Sometimes I call it "the co-education of mind and body"; and sometimes "the education of the whole man," which perhaps is best of all.<sup>1</sup>

I am hoping that some day there will be established a great recreational university, with due stages leading up to it in primary and secondary forms—not to the exclusion of academic education, but as supplementing and completing it.<sup>2</sup> In that university and

<sup>1</sup> For further development of this conception, see my book, *Education of the Whole Man*, published by The University of London Press.

<sup>2</sup> For a fuller account of this see Chapter IX—"A National College of Recreational Culture."

in those schools all the highest qualities of human beings, the qualities that make the whole man or the whole woman, would be studied, challenged, and developed, from the time the pupils were able to stand on their feet till the time when their arteries began to ossify. Here would be taught and learnt the “threefold reverence” which Goethe proclaimed as the foundation of human culture—reverence for what is above us, reverence for what is around us, reverence for what is below us—everything included as worthy of reverence from the stars over our heads to the graves beneath our feet. Here the body would be given its rights along with the mind ; its beautiful aptitudes would be developed, its creative functions directed, its reservoirs of latent skill released, and led onwards to excellent performance on a thousand lines.

What then, you will ask, are we to have *two* systems of education—the present one preparing young people for the work of life, and a new one preparing them for the play, with “recreational” schools, universities, and

leaders all complete, one for labour and the other for leisure ?

In answer I must first express a doubt whether the existing system *does* prepare young people for the work of life quite as efficiently as it might do. The *creative* aspect of work, the most important aspect, and the one where leadership comes most into play, has too small a place in its programme.

But what is work, and what is play ? When you listen to a master performing great music on the violin, or watch a Pavlova visibly enacting the music of the human body, arts acquired by years of the sternest discipline, is it work, or is it play that you are witnessing ? *It is both.* Work and play have joined hands. Labour and leisure have combined their natures. Art and industry have become *one*. The highest kind of work and the highest kind of play are indistinguishable one from the other. They are two names for the same thing. May it not be, therefore, that our two systems of education, one for work and the other for play, will find, as they get deeper

into their business, that they are not two systems, but *one*, and the leader in either of them, a leader also in the other.

Our recreational university will not spend its time in "fooling." Its business will be to lift the play of life to the level of excellent performance, to the level of beautiful art, so that leisure will be filled, not with fooling, but with delightful activity, replete with enjoyment to the actor and with benefit to the world at large. A very serious undertaking, I think.

In the next place, I will again remind you, the leisure we enjoy at one end of life has to be supported by labour at the other end ; our glance into the shop windows satisfied us of that. Our leisure, as things now are, is not self-supporting. Dependent on ready-made pleasures, and devoted as so much of it is to dull foolery of one kind or another, its living has to be earned for it by people who work while the rest are at play. As things now are, the world's labour carries the burden of the world's leisure. Already that burden is great.



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How much greater will it become if machinery does what the experts predict and gives the people twenty hours out of twenty-four to play with ? A mission for the recreational leader arises out of that. His mission will be, in part at least, to convert leisure from a dependent condition into a self-supporting one—to help leisure to earn its own living by joyous exertion.

To take a very simple example. One of the unemployed in my neighbourhood, one of those blessed exceptions I spoke of, has spent the months of his unemployment in creating a beautiful and productive garden. He finds that more enjoyable, more amusing, he says, than listening to sob-stuff at the “talkies.” That man has not stagnated ; he has not let himself be led by the nose. What a hint for the recreational leader is there ! The skill of the gardener is only one of a thousand forms of the latent skill which now wait for the recreational leader to evoke from his followers.

His *followers* ! My last word shall be about them.

I am fain to think that the difficulty we have in these days in finding great leaders arises from the fact that the great followers are not forthcoming. If leadership has decayed, followership has decayed still more. And how can you have the one without the other? Between a great leader and a great follower, I know not which is the greater man. I know not which of the two to honour more. How fond Sir Walter Scott was of the great follower! How nobly he has painted his character—the loyal man, the loyal woman, who followed the leader through thick and thin! Scott's leaders are sometimes great, but his followers are greater. The type is dying out in these equalitarian days when every man is as good as another, if not better. And yet I am not hopeless that it may be revived.

Perhaps our recreational university might do something to revive it. In the world of skill, where our university would operate, men and women find their proper places readily and swiftly. When two men meet on the field of argument, political or otherwise,

it may be doubtful which is the better man ; but when they meet on the field of skill you see the difference in a flash. On that field the leader arises spontaneously. And when he arises there is an interesting fact to be observed about him. You will always find, when you look into his history, that he began his career as a great follower. A great leader is a great follower who has won promotion on the battlefield of life. And even when he has won his leadership and is leading for all he is worth, again you will find, if you look closely, that he is still following something above himself. He is still following his star. And the name of his star is Joy, leading him ever onward and upward from the dull follies that men call " pleasure " to the " things of beauty that are joys for ever." Who will not follow such a leader ?

## Chapter III

### A NEW ADVENTURE IN EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>

AT the Recreation Congress in Toronto I saw something very wonderful which filled me with hope and which seemed to me to reveal the true nature of the recreation movement. I saw a crowd of human beings rapidly transformed by simple "folk games" into a joyous community, happy in one another's society, not merely having a good time, but having a good time *all together*, which is a very different and much higher thing. It seemed to me that this crowd, transformed into a happy community by those simple arts, was a kind of first sketch of the brotherhood of man.

The transformation of the crowd into the community—that, I venture to think, is the summary mission of the recreation movement. What was done there, and in

<sup>1</sup> Stenographic report of a public address given after the Recreation Congress at Toronto, October, 1931.

ten minutes, remains to be done for the human family at large—the transformation of the human crowd into the human community the wide world over. But it will not be done in ten minutes, as it was done there. Yet it will be done one of these days, and when it *is* done it will be found that the recreation movement has played a part second to none in bringing it to pass.

My old habit of dreaming, which I thank God I have not entirely lost, came back to me in full force as I watched the proceedings, as I saw before me a crowd thus transformed into a community. That is the way to “build Jerusalem among the dark satanic mills in England’s green and pleasant land” and in every green and pleasant land the wide world over.

Play, recreation, and leisure. What have these to do with education? If this question had been asked twenty years ago, or even ten years ago, it might have been somewhat difficult to answer. If anybody had stated, at

all events in England, at that time, that play, recreation, and leisure lie inside the field of education and not outside, that they are things which education has to provide for and not merely to tolerate, he would have been dismissed as a faddist.

I speak from experience. Twenty years ago a few of us began saying this very thing. We said that an education which trained young people for work but not for play, for labour but not for leisure, for toil but not for recreation, was a half-done job. The traditional method, we said, of loading young people with knowledge, mostly in the form of book learning, and then turning them loose on the world with the *creative* part of them undeveloped, with no aptitude, with no skill, no interests for the occupation of their leisure, was a procedure humanly inadequate and socially dangerous. Not the way to make good citizens, not the way to make healthy men and women. That is what we said, but for the most part we were voices crying in the wilderness.

How different things are to-day ! All over the civilized world education for leisure is challenging the attention of thoughtful men ; it is opening up new prospects and arousing new hopes for humanity. This change is taking place in every country of Europe. There is not a country in Europe to-day, except one or two of the most backward, which is not thinking and planning about education for leisure.

These words, play, recreation, and leisure, have become momentous words in the educational vocabulary. A vast new field of educational possibilities has disclosed itself on the play side of life, and multitudes of educators are now beginning to see that there, on the play side of life, at the leisure end of life, lies an opportunity for building up that higher and nobler humanity which the old system of education, concentrated on the book, gives little promise of achieving.

The discovery of the educational possibilities of the play side of life may be counted one of the greatest discoveries of the present day.

It marks, I am convinced, the dawn of a new era in human education.

One of the white-collar unemployed writing me said this : " So long as my job was there, my education helped me along splendidly, but now my job is gone, I am as empty as a barrel. My life is dull and drab and always on the verge of becoming vicious. Would to God I had something creative to do."

The unemployed are not the only people in modern society who find themselves in that " empty-barrel " condition when they pass from their work to their leisure. I have heard of men retiring from business with large fortunes to their credit, but with their barrels just as empty as that of my young friend when he lost his job. If you study the way people generally are spending their leisure time to-day, employed as well as unemployed, rich as well as poor, you will find that a great deal of it consists of a filling up of empty barrels with rather questionable stuff. Much that goes by the name of " amusement " is just that. How many of our places of amuse-



ment, how many of our pleasure resorts, how many of the movies and the talkies might well write up over their doors, "Empty Barrels Filled Up Here" !

Education for leisure is an attempt to change that condition. A man or a woman educated for leisure will not depend upon other people to keep amused. That, indeed, is the definition of a person educated for leisure ; he doesn't depend upon someone else to give him amusement. He will amuse himself. He will be, as the Germans now say, "self-active" in his leisure, and not a mere passive receptacle for pleasant experiences that have to be poured into him from outside.

That leads me to say a word about a fundamental truth which underlies the work of our movement and which accounts, at all events, for my firm belief in the value of what we are attempting. Man, as we are now coming to understand him, is by nature and in essence a creative being. Creation, in one or other of its endless forms, is the essential function

of man. It is the keyword of human nature. We are told that man was made in the image of his creator. How, then, can he fail to be creative himself? His body is a creative instrument, wonderfully and fearfully made for creative purposes. His mind has a corresponding function; his mental faculties might be defined as a kind of organized conspiracy to direct and vitalize the creative activities of his body.

Man is a skill-hungry animal, hungry for skill in his body, hungry for skill in his mind, and never satisfied until that skill-hunger is appeased. What a discontented, miserable animal man is until he gets satisfaction for this skill-hunger that is in him! Self-activity in skill and creation is the summary function of human nature from childhood on.

This conception of man is not new. It was announced by the philosopher, Aristotle. The revival of it in modern times marks a profoundly significant advance in the right understanding of ourselves, of our children, and of our neighbours. Unless I am mis-

taken, the civilization of the future will be founded on it.

We used to be told, and we are often told to-day, that man was created for the enjoyment of happiness. I would be the last to deny that. There is a profound truth here, but a truth often misunderstood. We misunderstand it when we think of man as though he were an empty receptacle, waiting to be filled up with happiness from sources outside himself. Since the world began, no human being was ever made happy by having happiness poured into him from outside, or ever will be to the world's end. The happiness that man's nature demands is impossible until the creative part of him is awakened, until his skill-hunger is satisfied. Man's happiness, the happiness for which he was created, comes from within himself. Till then, and till his happiness begins to well up from within through this self-active, creative life, man is living on a starvation diet ; he is devitalized ; he is in low condition ; he is wanting in mind and in body. Created for the

enjoyment of happiness, yes, but on those terms. No amount of ready-made pleasures purchased on the market, no intensity of external excitement, will ever compensate for the loss of creative impulse or for the starvation of his essential nature as a skill-hungry being. That is a fundamental truth, and to me there is no truth about human nature more certain, more important, more vital, whenever the education of human beings, either of children or of adults, is in question.

What has this fundamental truth to do with play and recreation? As I see the matter, these words—play, recreation, leisure—are the names of a great opportunity for awakening self-activity, the dormant creativeness of human beings, which other influences and other circumstances of our times are unhappily tending to suppress.

We all know what has happened to England, what has happened all over the world. We know how mass production and mechanization have affected the whole field of work, agriculture not excepted. We see this pro-

cess of mechanization going on everywhere with increasing rapidity. We are looking forward to times when mechanization will be far more advanced than it now is.

Well, what would that mean ? What would an approximation to it mean ? It would mean the creation of an enormous amount of free time, to be used, or misused, as the case may be.

From the human point of view, as distinct from the economic, this process of increasing mechanization is unquestionably injurious. It has greatly reduced the area where personal skill is possible, without, of course, destroying it entirely, and that is a human misfortune, because personal skill in one or other of its countless forms is an essential element in human life.

But, happily, that is not the end of the story about mechanization. If mechanization is extinguishing skill at the labour end of life, it also is creating leisure at the other end. May not the leisure that machinery creates by reducing the hours of work offer to man an

opportunity for recovering the skill, the joy of skill, which the machine is destroying at the other end? There are some of us who think that it does.

In the increasing total of work-free time that is now certain, we see an opportunity for making good what has been lost through mechanization. We see in it an opportunity for the highest form of human education. Not for a moment will we allow that education for leisure is a trivial thing, a mere device for adding a little enjoyment to a dull and joyless life. We claim it as essential to the health, happiness, character, intelligence, vitality of our great populations.

There can be no doubt that if we succeed in setting on foot a sound education for leisure, the effects of it on mechanical civilization will be profound and far-reaching. Great readjustments will be necessary and some of them perhaps will be painful. Industry would have to adapt itself to new conditions; new and higher demands would spring up at the leisure end of life. That part of industry

which is now occupied in meeting the demands of a wasteful and uneducated leisure would tend to disappear, and there is a good deal of our modern industry which is occupied in just that. Ugly and worthless things would cease to flood the markets ; goods of high quality would take their places. Houses would be better built, cities would be more beautifully laid out, clothes would be made of finer stuff, food would be more wholesome.

So, in the long run, machinery itself, mass production itself, might become infected with the passion for excellence in place of the passion for gain, and so turn into an ally and a supporter of the higher education of mankind.

In what I have said—I have, of course, confined myself to the general aims and motives of our movement—a thousand questions arise as to how this is to be done and how that is to be done, but for the moment I brush them all aside because my belief is that so long as we know what we are after, so long as our purpose is clear and our hearts courageous, the

difficulties will not be found insurmountable and the dangers, of which there are many, will not be fatal.

The truth is that in this recreation movement we have embarked on a great adventure. We are, like Columbus, setting out to discover a new world. We are pioneers, and the pioneering spirit which led our ancestors into the wilderness all over the world is leading us to-day to the discovery of a continent of human values richer in real treasure than all the gold mines in the world.

Of course, we may come to grief. Nobody should ever embark upon a great adventure without facing the possibility that he may come to grief. But that risk may well be faced. It is not a hard condition for those who believe, as I do, that life consists in the facing of risks and is never so precious, never so well worth living as when we face the risks courageously.

Among the many dangers confronting us there are two against which I will venture a word of warning.



At one extreme lies the danger of over-organization, the danger of hampering leisure with too many rules and too much good advice. Our virtues when carried to excess are apt to become vices, and that is especially true of organization, which is needed in all human affairs but turns into tyranny when it is overdone. In the playtime of the people, whether children or adults, freedom must always be given its rights. Domination by experts is out of the question on the playgrounds of life.

At the other extreme is the danger of no organization at all. A public playground when nothing is done to keep up the standard of play and no suggestions offered to the people who frequent it of worth while occupations for their leisure—and I am sorry to say there are many such playgrounds—is very largely a lost opportunity.

It is the function of a skilled recreational leader to find the mean between these two extremes.

## Chapter IV

### COMMUNITY IN RECREATION

I HAVE long been convinced that whenever great difficulties are to be overcome or great evils conquered the method of direct attack upon them is rarely the most successful. Our social problems seldom spring from a single cause and we need to get round all the causes if our attack is to be effective. For this reason a wide encircling movement will often give far better results than frontal attacks. Too many of our modern crusades are based on the opposite idea. They take the form of attempts, mostly by legislative action, to smash in the front line of the enemy at the very point where it stands most strongly entrenched. But far more sweeping victories can be won by those who have the patience and skill to work gradually round the enemy's flanks and get at the rear of his position.

That is precisely what education does. I

regard education as a wide encircling movement in the war against social evil, less spectacular, perhaps, than the crusading method, but more effective in the long run. The problem education has to answer might be put in this form : “ How can the whole man be educated so that his dominant motive may be one of making a valuable contribution to the life of the community ? ” We cannot do this by direct attack on the selfishness of the natural man. We cannot do it by propaganda, by repeating the maxims of social philosophy, by telling people that making contributions to the common life is their duty, nor by merely *telling* them anything. We can do it only by the slower and less spectacular process of training, of discipline, of education. And observe it is “ the whole man ” who is to be trained, disciplined, educated. To educate a man—or a child, for the matter of that—you must get round him in his entirety, mind and body, soul and character, all regarded as one inseparable unity. You must cast a wide circuit, work round his

flanks, and close in upon him from every side.

And now what kind of education is it that will give this result ?

In the first place, we must be on our guard against trying to educate people in high-handed ways. I am myself an ardent educationalist, but I observe with regret that some of my fellow educationalists are putting forward claims for education which seem to me not only extravagant, but dangerous. The science of psychology, for which I have a great respect in its proper place, has recently come into great prominence in the field of education. If properly applied this science would have the effect of increasing our sanity. But if we allow it to run away with us, as some of us, I am afraid, are inclined to do, it has the opposite effect. There is a notion abroad that the educator, armed with the science of psychology, can mould human nature to any pattern he pleases. He becomes a kind of god, while his pupils, whether children or adults, are just raw

## EDUCATION THROUGH RECREATION

material, clay in the hands of the potter, completely at his mercy and waiting to receive whatever stamp, whatever form, his psychological wisdom may choose for them. Does he want to make his pupils religious ? The psychology of religion will show him how to do it. Does he want to develop the community spirit ? The psychology of the group mind will show him how to do it. Does he want to develop their intellectual nature, or their æsthetic nature, or their emotional nature, or their social nature ? Let him study psychology and the thing can be done.

And psychology is not the only science that is talking in the same strain. Men and women, we are told, become what they are through the influence upon them of their environment. Get control of the environment, therefore, and you are completely master of the human situation ; again, you can turn out human beings to any pattern you please. And there are two sciences which tell you how to do that—biology, which selects the physical environment, and sociology, which selects the

social environment. Armed with these three, psychology, biology, and sociology, we can perform on human nature any kind of operation which science may decree for its benefit.

In all this there is doubtless a large element of truth. But it seems to me that something of great importance has been left out of the picture, which is nothing less than the human personalities of the people—shall I say the unfortunate people?—who are thus being operated upon by the scientific experts.

So long as I think of myself as one of the operators in a scientific conspiracy to do other people good, the picture gives me a sense of power and fills me with complacency. But when I reverse the situation and think of myself not as one of the operators, but *as one of the people operated upon*—one of the victims, so to speak—my feelings undergo a sudden revulsion. I have no desire to be shepherded into heaven by experts in the psychology of religion. I have no desire to be *made* a good man or a happy man or even a wise man by operations performed upon me by other

people. I feel, rather, like Thoreau, who said that if he heard that somebody was coming to his house for the purpose of making him happy he would flee to the ends of the earth to get out of his way. My human personality revolts against this dominance of scientific experts. If the man I am is a man whom somebody else has *made* what he is, then I am not a man at all—I am only a manufactured product. And, as I would not submit to such conditions myself, I feel pretty sure that the mass of mankind will never consent to be treated as raw material for educators to do with what they will. Whatever education can do for human beings, it can never go the length of depriving them of the captaincy of their own souls and transferring it to an external operator, whether psychologist, biologist, sociologist, or all three combined. As I conceive it, the task of education, in schools or in colleges, is not to take control of human beings, as a potter takes control of a lump of clay, an operation to which human nature will never submit, and would surrender its

very birthright if it did—not that, but rather to induce in human nature the power *to control itself*.

The greatest service education can render to any human being, child or adult, is *to lead him to the discovery of his own powers*. And in order to accomplish that you must do two things : first, you must manage somehow to liberate his energies, of which an immense reservoir lies hidden in every human being ; and next you must help him to discover the wonderful means nature has furnished him with for bringing those energies under beautiful control. If you think of education as a work of *liberation* and *vitalization* you have got to the essence of what it can do for human beings.

In all this I have been suggesting the answer to the question—how to induce the community spirit in the people you have to do with, young or old. Strictly speaking, there can be no question of inducing it, because it is there already, one of those unsuspected energies I spoke of a moment ago, awaiting



liberation in every human being. Man is naturally co-operative—a born co-operator, a fact often overlooked, though needing to be greatly stressed whenever education, either of children or of adults, is in question. Whether you study the constitution of his mind or his body, you find at every point that the activity his structure demands, and is fitted for, is not isolated activity, but concerted activity. The man is made to co-operate with the woman, and *vice versa* ; the parent with the child ; the old with the young ; the individual with his neighbour—why else is he endowed with the faculty of speech ? He works best when he is working *with others*, plays best when he plays against another player, and should be thought of as playing *with* him, since without an antagonist there is no game at all. *Man needs an antagonist* both for work and for play ; and his antagonist is often his best friend.

## Chapter v

### “ RHYTHMIC HUMAN COMPANIONSHIP ”

IN the concert, the chorus, the orchestra, we have types of the co-operative action suited to the nature of man. What is human society itself but a kind of orchestra, imperfectly trained as yet and waiting for a competent conductor? There is in man an instinct for co-operation akin to that which guides the flight of a flock of birds—an instinct greatly atrophied in these days, but ready to be evoked. You see it in young children, especially in the ease with which they acquire the art of rhythmic dancing to complicated patterns—an art which Plato thought was the right beginning for the education of the citizen.

A remarkable testimony to the same effect can be found in one of the last writings that came from the pen of Thomas Carlyle—a writer from whom one would hardly expect it. The passage is well worth quoting. It con-

tains a hint of great practical value to all educators who would promote the community spirit. "It is strange to me," he says, "that in all education of mankind the value of *combined rhythmic action* has been overlooked by pedagogues and professors. It should be set on foot and developed into the opulent results it holds for all of us. To all the children of men it is such an entertainment, when you set them to it. I believe the vulgarest Cockney crowd flung out millionfold on Whit Monday, with nothing but beer and dull folly to depend on for amusement, would at once kindle into something human if you set them to do almost any regulated act in common. They would dismiss their beer and dull folly, in the silent charm of rhythmic human companionship, in the practical feeling that all of us are made on one pattern and are brothers one to another" <sup>1</sup> (*Shooting Niagara*, 1867).

"Rhythmic human companionship"—I ask you to make a note of that phrase and

<sup>1</sup> This quotation is condensed.

carry it with you in your efforts to promote the community spirit. The other day I had the opportunity of witnessing an exhibition of what is known as “ Dalcroze eurythmics ”—one of the many efforts now being made by far-seeing educators to develop this wonderful gift for rhythmic human companionship, which all young people possess, but are apt to lose when the shades of the prison house begin to close round them. I was profoundly impressed. I felt, as I had never felt before, that the human body is a creative instrument, endowed with marvellous powers for “ rhythmic human companionship,” and a vision rose before me of what Carlyle calls “ the opulent results,” socially, intellectually, and morally, that would follow the development of those powers. I strongly advise you to look up the merits of rhythmic dancing as a means of promoting the community spirit among your young people.

This brings me round to something I said earlier about the superiority of indirect methods in educational strategy—my prefer-

ence for the encircling movement which gets round the whole man as against the direct attack on some prominent element of human nature.

Now the most prominent element in the human make-up is the *mind*, and educational practice hitherto has mainly consisted of a direct attack on the mind—the mind of the child, the mind of the adult. I yield to no man in my estimation of the human mind. But if I could have my way as an educator I would not spend all my efforts on direct attacks upon the mind by book learning and by academic methods. I would seek rather to outflank the mind by getting round the *body*. I would bring the body into my educational net, and not leave it, as heretofore, to hygienists and athletic trainers, who are excellent people on their own field, but poor educators. I would give the body a *liberal education*, I would develop it as the creative instrument nature intended it to be, on the lines of “rhythmic human companionship,” and I would make that education accessible

to every member of the community. That, I would say, is the sort of education that is needed if the world is to be made safe for democracy, which is the political form of rhythmic human companionship. I would get at the mind less through the spoken word that enters by the ears and more by the skill that comes out of the five fingers ; and not only from the five fingers, but from the body as a whole. I would train the body as a skilful community instrument both in work and in play—and more perhaps in play than in work—for the playtime of the people is the great field where the new education must look for its conquests.

I am looking forward to the day when the movement for adult education will take that direction, and I rejoice to see it is already beginning to do so. It has been held too long in academic fetters. It must shake them off, and instead of feebly following in the footsteps of schools and colleges, must seek rather to set an example for them to follow. The education of the whole man, as an in-

separable unity of mind and body, created for "rhythmic human companionship," and finding his highest joys in the beautiful art of co-operation—I give you that as a summary formula for adult education.

It has recently been said by a high authority that one of the greatest difficulties our elementary schools have to contend with arises from the devitalized condition in which so many of the children come to school. Concordant with this are the medical statistics which show what a large proportion of our town populations, some say 60 per cent., suffer from a malady known in medical parlance as neurasthenia, the significance of which would be better understood if it were called weak will, or simply "low condition." So long as this low condition prevails it seems to me impossible for the work of education to prosper.

In one case that I investigated I learnt some interesting facts in regard to this. An Institute for Adult Education had been started in a great city. It was soon found that the young

## “ RHYTHMIC HUMAN COMPANIONSHIP ”

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men and women who came to the Institute, mostly workers in shops and factories, were too tired, too listless, to take any interest in the cultural opportunities that were offered to them. All they wanted was some form of external excitement, some form of ready-made pleasure. The management then decided to attack this problem of devitalization. All the classes and lectures were scrapped and a new start was made with community dancing under the direction of a gifted instructor who was aware of the fact, which the Greeks knew long ago, that the human body is a natural musical instrument, and who was prepared to treat dancing as a fine art, somewhat on the principles of Dalcroze. The results were astonishing. Through the awakening of this unsuspected power the young people began to discover themselves. Rhythmic human companionship began. The instinct for skill was roused into action, and with that the devitalization began to disappear. And as it disappeared there arose among these shop-girls and factory workers a



spontaneous demand for skill in many directions, mostly in the direction of the arts.

Such an institution, if started anywhere, would soon be besieged by the classes for whom it was intended. It would rapidly develop from its first beginnings. Skilful occupations of all kinds would be demanded—arts, crafts, and interesting hobbies. It would gradually work its way to the finer arts. Unsuspected gifts for music, for singing, for painting and sculpture, would disclose themselves. And all this would take place in a social atmosphere where fellowships would form themselves spontaneously. I know of few better ways of promoting the community spirit ; of few more likely to prove attractive and fruitful. Don't begin, I would say, by *talking* to young people about the community spirit, by giving them lectures on it. Keep all that for a later stage. Begin by getting them busy *together* on something that is worth while, and if possible beautiful. So long as you get their instinct for co-operation awakened, it matters little in how humble

a form you begin. Once awakened, it will grow of itself into higher forms. And, of course, the younger you catch them, the better your chance of success.

The best opportunity that now exists for developing the community spirit lies in the field of recreation, the leisure end of life, the playtime of the people, both children and adults. Get it started there and it will soon react on the work-field and become a vital element in the building up of good citizenship and civilization.

## Chapter VI

### DEMOCRACY AND RECREATION

THERE is widespread belief in democratic countries that the well-being of the community depends on what happens at election times—in other words, on the way people vote. Mingled with this there sometimes goes the preposterous idea—that any form of well-being the community sets its heart on can be brought into existence by getting a sufficient number of people to vote for it.

Both these beliefs seem to me to be a gross exaggeration which a wise democracy would do well to get rid of. While I would agree that the well-being of the community depends to some extent on how we vote at elections, it depends far more on what we do with ourselves *in the intervals between the elections*. We are indulging a very dangerous delusion if we suppose that the well-being of the community can be brought about by the simple and easy process of voting for this or voting

for that. The well-being of the community is a very difficult affair—difficult to get in the first instance, and still more difficult to keep after you have got it. It demands continuous personal exertion on the part of everybody who desires it. On the Day of Judgment I anticipate that the main question we shall all have to answer will not be about the way we voted at election times, but about the way we did our jobs in the intervals between the elections.

The books I have read about the training of the citizen do less than they ought to correct these delusions. Some may even be said to foster them. In most of them too much emphasis is laid on the political aspect of citizenship, and too little on the other aspects. The main object these writers have in mind is that of training the citizen to make a wise use of his vote. Voting on public questions is regarded as his chief function, the two words “voter” and “citizen” being used interchangeably as though they meant the same thing and covered the same ground. The

citizen has done his main duty when he has voted wisely. The good citizen is the wise voter.

In my own view, the main function of the citizen is that of a worker rather than a voter. Whether he is a good citizen or not depends primarily, I think, on the quality of the work he does in the daily course of his vocation, of hand or head or both as the case may be. If, therefore, I had the training of the citizen to prescribe for, I should aim first and foremost to train him as an excellent worker, and I should do so in the belief that I was training him as a good voter into the bargain. And for this reason : a good worker is likely to be a man—or a woman—with a high standard of value, and a high standard of value is what is wanted in politics, and wanted every time.

I am not suggesting that voting is unimportant. I regard it as highly important not only for the good that it may do, but for the harm. Whether it does more good or harm as carried on under present conditions is a point on which opinions differ. It is a complicated

question. One has to consider the value of the things that are being voted about, which may or may not be the things that are most worth while ; and after that there is the effect of voting on the voter, and still more, perhaps, the effect on the man who is voted for.

There are some who think that voting as now carried on leads to mass bribery and so demoralizes both the voter and the man voted for—and there is certainly a danger of that. Others say that it lowers the standard of statesmanship, by making the statesman into the tool of popular opinion rather than the guide of it, so that the ship of state drifts down the current instead of being guided to any certain goal. Whether these dangers are counterbalanced by giving a vote to every adult citizen and so spreading responsibility over the largest possible area—whether that is so or not is as yet too early to say. For though democracy is a very old idea and has existed in limited forms for a long time, democracy as we now have it, the democracy of

vast populations and universal suffrage, is a new thing in the world and is still on its trial. But whatever the outcome may be, I still believe that we are giving democracy the best chances of turning out well by training the citizen, the young citizen especially, as an excellent worker.

I must add, however, that in my conception of work the idea of play is included. The finest kinds of work and the finest kinds of play are almost indistinguishable, almost two names for the same thing. It is only on their lower levels that work and play are opposites. On their higher levels they converge and become the same thing. The happiest man alive, if you could find him, would be the man whose work is his play and whose play is his work. By training the citizen as an excellent worker we should not only be giving him the best chances of becoming an excellent voter, but we should be leading him on to the finest playfields that life has to offer, the playfields of beautiful work. On the other hand, by training him to excellent play, which is a dif-

ferent thing from athletics, we should be vitalizing his education as a worker.

It is on the fields of excellent play that boys and girls, men and women, can acquire most easily and delightfully the great art of co-operation—the most beautiful art in the world. If you want your citizen to be a good co-operator—and how can he be a good citizen otherwise?—put him through the discipline of excellent play. Plato recommended that. And a very important consideration it is for us to-day, in view of the increased leisure which has come to all classes and the still greater leisure that is promised in the future as human labour is more and more displaced by machinery. As time goes on we shall find, I think, that the fortunes of our civilization will become increasingly dependent on what people do with their play-time, on how they spend their leisure, and, further, on the kind of goods they require and the kind of services they demand to keep them amused and happy in the long hours when they are not at work. I believe that



the playtime of the people will become in the future a great field of human education, but a different kind of education from that which now goes by the name.

I think, therefore, that this habit of isolating the political function of the citizen from his work and play function, and then training him as though he were nothing but a voter, by putting him through a course of what we call "civics," or by giving him university extension lectures in social and political science, so that he can argue on platforms about capital and labour, or free trade and protection—I think all that is a mistake. It betokens a false perspective, a lopsided and inadequate view of what citizenship really consists. That is not the right way of training the citizen to make a wise use of his vote.

Is it possible to educate our vast democracies to the requisite degrees of competence for dealing in a wise and effective way with all those difficult and complicated questions which now occupy the battlefields of our political life?

Let us consider the situation with an open mind. In all the great democracies you have, along with a very unequal distribution of political *capacity*, an equal distribution of political *power*, indicated by the formula, "one man, one vote." There seems no likelihood at all that that rule will be abandoned. Apart from revolution, the only way in which it could be done would be by a voluntary renunciation of their votes on the part of the less capable voters. Of that there is no sign and no likelihood.

Now, I shall not enlarge on the dangers that arise in democratic societies when the even distribution of political power, under the rule of "one man, one vote," is combined with a highly uneven distribution of political capacity among the various types and classes of voting citizens. These dangers have been pointed out by every writer on democracy from Plato's *Republic* to Dean Inge's *Outspoken Essays*. Instead of repeating what has been so abundantly said on this topic, I will turn to a question which I think has not

been sufficiently considered. Is there any known method of training the citizen by which these dangers can be averted ? Is there any known system of education which can be relied on for raising political capacity in the mass of the people sufficiently high to justify the even distribution of political power under the rule of " one man, one vote " ?

We have been told so often that education is the remedy for the evils of democracy, that many of us take it as an axiomatic truth. And so perhaps it is. As a general statement it seems to me indisputably true that education is the safeguard to which democracy must look. At the same time I take leave to doubt whether education, as now carried on in schools and colleges, state supported or not, is at all likely to achieve the end in view—that of raising the political capacity of the masses to the level which democracy requires. The situation seems to be this : we have got democracy ; we have got agreement that democracy must be educated ; we have got universal education ; but the kind of education

we have got, though not without its merits, *is not the kind of education democracy requires.*

Political capacity is a very high form of human endowment. It involves a breadth of vision, a long foresight, a degree of detachment from our own interests, a sense of responsibility, a steadfastness of purpose, a sweep of imagination and a power of dealing with technical problems that are not easily acquired. These are high qualities. Plato saw that very clearly and laid down a severe course of training, perhaps too severe, for all who would acquire them. Are those qualities being produced, are they even being led up to, by the type of education now being given to the rising generation? I believe they are not.

And there is another point rarely mentioned by those who believe that education is the remedy. Education is a slow process. It takes time. Suppose, then, that it were possible to set on foot to-morrow a perfect system for training the young citizen, how long would it be before the effects of that training

became visible in the life of democracy ? How long would it be before the new system began to tell ? A long time, certainly. Well, I may be mistaken, but if so I am mistaken along with some very high authorities, when I say that the fate of democracy is not going to wait a long time to get itself decided. It will be decided not by those who are going to have to vote fifty years hence, but by those who have the vote now.

In the next place I would call your attention to the difficulty, the extreme delicacy and highly technical nature, of many of the public questions with which the fortunes of the community are now involved. There is a growing complexity about these matters which puts them beyond the range of the average voter and can only be dealt with by the highest degree of expert knowledge and skill. What are the merits of the gold standard ? What is the exact amount of reparations that Germany should pay ? How should a miner's wages be adjusted to the complicated conditions of his work ? What are the right

measures for regulating the flow of credit ? On what principles is the banking system to be carried on ? How is the next Budget to be scientifically balanced ? Ought the currency to be inflated or deflated ? What are the relative effects of direct and indirect taxation ? These are samples of the kind of questions in which the action of the state is more and more deeply involved. They are immensely difficult. I certainly find them so myself, and would no more trust my own judgment in deciding some of them than I would trust myself to regulate the treatment of disease in a large hospital.

The question I would ask then is this : Can we hope, by our existing system of training, to raise the voting power of our enormous electorate to the point of competent judgment on these complicated questions ? Can that lowest level of political capacity which does not even know what an election is " all about," which may even have been deliberately misinformed, be educated into intelligent dealing with the gold standard or the

balancing of a modern budget ? Can the intermediate levels, represented, let us say, by voters like myself, be turned by education into equality with the experts who have devoted their lives to these matters, while we have only dabbled in them ? Frankly, I think it impossible. The course of education is not moving in that direction, nor towards that goal. I doubt if we are appreciably nearer to it than we were when compulsory education was established. And there is this difference between then and now—the voting masses have become vastly greater and the problems to be handled vastly more difficult.

If that hope must be abandoned, does it follow that the training of the citizen must be abandoned altogether ? I should despair if I thought so. Only those will think so who make the mistake I spoke of at the beginning—that of treating the citizen as though he were a voter and nothing more, and voting the only thing he needs training for. Fortunately, the citizen has other fields of activity open to him in which he can render service of

the utmost value to his fellow-citizens and enrich the value of his own life at the same time. It is for these I would chiefly train him. It is for these I would be trained myself. I would try, if I had the opportunity, to make an all-round complete man of him—intellectually and morally. I would rethink and revise the whole system of national education with the conception of the *whole man* constantly in mind. My training of him or his training of me—put it which way you will—should be *human* throughout and not merely political, not merely scientific, nor *merely* anything else. And I would do all that—or have all that done to me—not because I regard voting as unimportant, but because I believe that your complete citizen, your all-round man, is the man least likely to make a mess of his voting, least likely to follow the instincts of the herd, least likely to be cajoled, flattered, or bribed by people who are out to capture his vote.

The school I would send him to—or go to myself—should be called the School of Excel-



lence ; I would place him there almost from the time he could stand on his feet, and I would find some means of keeping him there till the time when his work and play were done.

And what would I teach him, or be taught myself ? I would teach him in the first place the excellent management of his own body, a very beautiful art, of which the average pedagogue knows nothing, and the athletic trainer hardly more, but which every human being is capable of learning and ought to learn as the foundation or growing point of all the qualities that make a good citizen. Along with the mental training of the three R's, which saves him from illiteracy, I would give him the physical training which saves him from becoming a neurasthenic, a degenerate, or a hospital patient ; and I would make that beautiful art accessible to all classes of the community in exactly the same way as the art of reading books and newspapers is made accessible now. And then, having taught my young citizen the excellent

management of his body, I should be in a position to proceed, stage by stage, to the excellent management of his life as a whole—the life of a self-controlling, self-respecting individual, a life of ordered co-operation and voluntary discipline, the creator of his own pleasures, instead of a purchaser of pleasure ready made, a life of skilful activity, enjoyable in itself and socially valuable to the world at large. The beginning of all that lies in the *body*.

If such a method were applied to the training of our citizens, I feel confident that the voting part of the citizen's business would soon get itself better done. How can we expect the citizen to vote wisely while the rest of his life is all in a muddle—his body distracted, unmanaged, and tending to the "C3" condition; dependent for its pleasures on the external excitements of the cinema, the race-course, the night clubs, and the sex novel; his mind equally dependent on the ready-made opinion of the newspaper or the street corner or the first canvasser who happens to get him

by the buttonhole—a poor judge of values and a creator of nothing.

And not only would the voting be better done, but the things we vote about would be more worth while. Most of the things we are voting about now—our social problems, as we call them—are the direct outcome of the muddled lives that most of us live in the intervals between the elections. They are the products of personal confusion, of the want of self-control on the part of these very people—the majority of us—who are called upon at election time to set it all right by voting for remedial legislation. It is a vicious circle—as though a man were trying to fill a tank with water while all the time the spigot is wide open at the other end.

One word in conclusion. Let nobody think that I expect the millennium to follow from anything I have suggested. I gave up belief in the millennium long ago. I have long reconciled myself to the belief that whoever created man, whether nature or God, intended him for hard fighting all along the line of his

advance, and equipped him with powers and faculties to play the part of a brave pioneer. The pursuit of excellence, for which man was created, is a very difficult affair. I not only accept that, but welcome it and rejoice in it.

## Chapter VII

### HEALTH AND SKILL

THE relation of health and skill awaits investigation and urgently needs it, especially in the interests of educational reform. In spite of the general acceptance accorded to the saying, "a sound mind in a sound body," in spite of its familiarity, it may be doubted whether the true significance of it, *as applied to human beings*, has been rightly apprehended either by educational experts, administrators, schoolmasters in general, or by the audiences of "parents and friends" who applaud it when quoted at Commencement exercises, as it so often is. Even physicians often appear to understand it superficially. They are too apt to treat the health of a human being, or of a community, as consisting in freedom from disease. It is certainly much more than that.

The health of a human being, though having something in common with the health of an ox, is nevertheless on a different level and

is altogether misconceived when we think of it in terms appropriate only to the ox. A human being has other functions to perform than that of wholesomely digesting fodder and converting it into succulent beef, and would be incompetent to perform them if endowed only with the ox's health. The only healthy mind that could exist in such a body would be the mind of an ox ; to the healthy mind of a human being it would be an utterly inadequate instrument, even though it stood upright on two feet and wore the human shape. I would even go the length of saying that a healthy human mind might be more at home with a body crippled by disease and destined to a premature death (like Keats, for example) than with a body whose health consisted only in qualities appropriate to the health of an ox.

I suggest that, whether our object be educational reform or social reform (the two, in my opinion, are ultimately indistinguishable), we need a much deeper conception of bodily health than that which underlies our

current quotation of *mens sana in corpore sano*. I have no quarrel with the physiologist or the biologist, and am willing to accept as true and important all that the one tells me of the body's structure, and the other of its history. But I would suggest that the true nature of the body is not exhausted by the accounts they give of it. Beyond all that, and of course including it, I see in the body (as who may not see ?) a marvellously fashioned instrument, to which all instruments of human invention are crude in comparison, exquisitely adapted and designed, in the correlation of its organs and senses, for creative activity akin to that of its creator, whoever or whatever the creator may be.

Following upon that comes a suggestion, which I now make, that the perfect health of the body demands, when all its other demands have been satisfied, that opportunity shall be found and training given for the exercise of creative activity. Short of this, the perfect health of the body is not attainable. The "exercise" it demands is essentially *skilful* exer-

cise and not mere *exertion*, of the kind, for example, recommended to Sidney Smith by his physician—"to take a walk on an empty stomach." The retort was "Whose?" An unskilled body is a thwarted body—thwarted, not in some minor detail, but in the very core and essence of its nature. And because thwarted, unhealthy. Even those elements of health which it shares with the body of an ox will suffer through the essential thwarting of its *human* nature—unless, indeed, the owner of it manages (as some do) to accommodate that nature to an oxlike level. These thwarted human bodies exist in millions among the massed populations of our great cities, and every one of them represents a thwarted *mind*, a thwarted human being.

Voices have recently been heard among us—my own has been one of them—earnestly pleading for reformed methods of education in which the acquisition of skill, and not the acquisition of knowledge alone, should be the object aimed at from the earliest stage and steadily pursued to the last. The plea has



naturally aroused a good deal of criticism, especially among professional educators, which has sometimes gone the length of accusing us of contempt for "knowledge." This of course, is absurd. Skill is nothing else than knowledge in action, or, better, wisdom completing itself by wisely doing what is accurately known. My conviction is that until knowledge is thus transformed into skill it has no vital connexion with the personality of the knower ; it is superficial, precarious, unfixed, unassimilated, so that most of it is destined to be lost sight of, neglected, misapplied, forgotten, or even despised in the stages of life which follow the stage known as education.

This, we contend, is actually happening on an enormous scale to the "knowledge" imparted, at great cost of money and labour, under our present system of training the young. We observe that the majority of those to whom the knowledge is imparted are incapable, through defective training in other respects, especially in the matter of self-

control, of putting what they are taught, in school or college, often imperfectly taught, it must be confessed, to any profitable, or even enjoyable use. Instead, therefore, of being treated as enemies of knowledge, we deserve to be welcomed as its friends, roused to indignant protest by the appalling waste of knowledge that is now going on under the half-done job which usurps the name of education. As friends and lovers of knowledge we are pleading for a type of education which shall incorporate knowledge into the personality of the knower and for the conversion of it, thereby, into creative activity. This conversion of knowledge into creative activity, through incorporation with the "whole man" of the knower, is precisely what we mean by skill. A little knowledge thus converted seems to us of higher value than much knowledge in the unfixed and half-formed condition represented by certificates, credits, matriculation tests, and university degrees. Of this half-knowledge we are indeed the enemies.

Of the many definitions of "man" there is one that seems to have more value than any other as a guiding principle in educational practice. This is the definition of man as "by nature a skill-hungry animal," for whom health and happiness are alike unattainable so long as his skill-hunger remains unsatisfied. The conception is as old as Aristotle, whose definition of man as a "political animal" is meaningless without it. For the political life, the life of the good citizen, is essentially an affair of *co-operation*, and co-operation is the finest and most difficult of all the arts. Vain is the hope of those who would produce co-operation, whether on the large scale or on the small, by preaching the necessity of it or by extolling the value of it—as well might we expect to produce a race of artists by extolling the arts or to create an orchestra by expounding the principles of harmony. That man alone will co-operate successfully with his fellows, in "politics" as in everything else, who has learnt self-mastery "from his youth up" and trained himself,

mind and body together, to follow the rhythms of the human symphony, adjusting his every action spontaneously and joyfully to the pattern of the common ideal, like an instrument in an orchestra, a singer in a chorus, a dancer treading with thousands of others the measure of a complicated dance. For that reason the good citizen is, of all men, the most skilled ; skilled in the use of powers which add something to the value of the social inheritance ; skilled in the yet higher sense of timing and tuning his contribution in harmony with the contributions of his fellows. No human qualities are more difficult to acquire, and none more delightful to exercise when acquired, than those which go to the make-up of man as a " political animal." How far our voting masses are from having acquired them we know to our cost. How little our " system of education " is doing to promote them has become patent to some of us. Yet " man " is hungry to acquire them and fully capable of their acquisition—but not all at once.

But we must begin farther back with the simpler proposition at the beginning of this chapter, that even for the individual, health and happiness are unattainable, at least in their higher forms, so long as his natural skill-hunger remains unsatisfied. Dull and drab at the best is the life of the man or woman incapable of creative activity ; dull and drab, and often vicious in the vain effort to escape the dullness and the drabness—the origin of most of the vices that disfigure and poison our civilization. That man desires happiness and can never be diverted from the pursuit of it is true ; but the happiness he desires is not of the kind that “ ready-made pleasures ” can supply or money purchase, no matter how abundant and varied. It is the joy of *work*—which at its highest level is indistinguishable from play, as the highest levels of play are indistinguishable from it—the joy of creative activity, which the whole structure of his mind and body, evolved through long ages of struggle with nature, designs him to exercise.

## Chapter VIII

### LEISURE, RECREATION, AND ART

LEISURE is a difficult subject to discuss, owing to the crop of mistaken ideas which have grown up around it and obscure its significance. I will begin by cutting a path through this jungle.

The commonest error is that leisure is always pleasant. This, of course, is not so. Mr. Bernard Shaw has said somewhere that the best definition of hell he knows of is an endless holiday—the everlasting state of having nothing to do and plenty of money to spend on doing it. This last needs to be added to make Mr. Shaw's definition complete. Which reminds one of the wealthy man who found himself, as he thought, in heaven, and after enjoying its repose for some time asked an attendant angel to give him something to do. The angel politely refused, whereupon the wealthy man grew indignant and said, "What is the good of heaven if it won't

grant a reasonable request like that?" "Man," said the angel, "you are not in heaven."

Whether leisure is pleasant or not depends on circumstances, and still more on the kind of man who has it. There is all the difference in the world between the leisure of wise men and the leisure of fools. Leisure is not pleasant—at least as a rule—when it has to be spent in gaol or on a sick-bed or in listening to the conversation of a bore, which last would tax the resources of the greatest philosopher to endure it patiently, whatever he might be able to do in gaol or on a sick-bed. Our friends can turn our leisure into a time of torture, and often do so by inviting us to parties we don't want to attend, or by ringing us up on the telephone, or by telling us long yarns about uninteresting things. Which leads, by the way, to an important rule about the use of leisure, one of the very few that can be laid down, "Don't spend your leisure in ways that spoil the leisure of your friends." Some of my own best friends seem to be

ignorant of this rule and I am not sure that I always observe it myself !

Even playing games is not always a pleasant occupation for leisure, especially if one plays them badly. Pleasure resorts where this kind of recreation is catered for often turn out very disappointing. At Monte Carlo, for example, there are many unhappy faces and suicides are not uncommon. If a census were taken of the people who ruin their happiness by the stupidity of their leisure occupations the figures would be appalling. Indeed, there are a thousand ways of spending one's leisure that are more unpleasant than the hardest work in the world. In nothing else do we human beings show ourselves such arrant fools as we do in that department. It needs a wise man to get full enjoyment out of his leisure.

Another common mistake is to draw a sharp line between labour and leisure, putting labour occupations into the left-hand column and leisure occupations into the right ; or treating leisure as though it began where labour left off. This clearly will not do,



because the labour occupation of one man is often the leisure occupation of another. A country walk is a leisure occupation for many of us, but not for a country postman who walks fifteen miles every day in delivering his letters. Even playing the fool, which is good (in small doses) for people who work too hard or take life too seriously, is not always a leisure occupation. A clown in a circus, who plays the fool professionally every night, is a hard-worked man ; he reminds one of Byron's gladiator " butchered to make a Roman holiday." I am not sure that even playing bridge can always be counted as a leisure occupation. Not long ago a lady confided to me the interesting secret that she spent so much time playing bridge that she had no leisure at all. Thomas A. Edison used to say that his work was his recreation—for him there was no line between labour and leisure ; and most of the great men of the world seem to have been made that way. On the highest levels of life the distinction between labour and leisure or between work and play fades

out. A great artist finds his play in his work. Play becomes art when raised to its highest excellence, its highest beauty, and its highest power. Anything that one does, from cooking a dinner to governing a state, becomes a work of art if motivated by the passion for excellence and done as well as it can be. A man who does his job in that spirit gets all the fun out of it that another man will spend thousands of dollars to get at Monte Carlo, and perhaps commit suicide when he has spent his money.

A mistake of another kind is often made by people who talk about "education for leisure," as so many of us now are doing. Education for leisure is greatly needed, and I am inclined to think the fate of civilization depends on our getting it. But we can easily go about it in the wrong way. We go about it in the wrong way when we give it in the form of detailed instruction as to how leisure should be spent, so much time for this, so much for that. Leisure is precisely one of those things which cannot be dealt with in

that way. As I travel about the cities of the United States people often say to me : “ Well, Dr. Jacks, here you are, and now you are going to tell us all how we are to use our leisure,” and I notice that some of the newspapers, which have done me the honour of referring to my visit, have been very jocular about this supposed attempt of mine to instruct the American people in the use of their leisure. Believe me, that is about the last thing in the world I would dream of doing either in America or anywhere else : I should expect to be laughed at for my pains if I did. Even psychology is not equal to doing that, in spite of the almost illimitable powers that are claimed for it ! Psychology is now very busy in helping young people to choose their labour occupations—vocational guidance, we call it—but I doubt if it can give us much help in choosing our leisure occupations, though they are just as important as the other. At all events, I am very sure that my own leisure occupations would lose their charm if I took them up merely because a psychologist

had told me that they were the ones best suited to my psychology. The essence and the charm of a leisure occupation arise from the fact that we have freely chosen it, that it represents our self-expression and is not a thing which some expert in leisure has told us we ought to do. If we ruled our leisure in that way we should soon be in the condition of the lady I quoted just now who spent so much time in playing bridge that she had no leisure at all.

Education for leisure is imperatively needed, but it must take a different line. What we can do and ought to do is to train young people, beginning in earliest childhood, up to the point *where they are able to make a good choice of their leisure occupations for themselves*. We do that *by awakening the creative side of them*, by giving them opportunities for using those creative faculties which all human beings possess in some degree, but which are often killed out by the education young people are getting now, to their great detriment in after-life, in regard

to both happiness and character. The reason so many people are at a loss what to do with themselves in their leisure time, and make a stupid use of it in consequence, is that their creative faculties were never awakened when they were young. A person whose creative faculties have been awakened will seldom be at a loss for an enjoyable and worthwhile leisure occupation.

If I could have my way in this universe (of which at present I see no likelihood) I would lay far more stress on awakening creative activity and far less on the acquisition of textbook knowledge to be tested by examinations. I would found a University of Creative Achievement which should give to its graduates the degree of Master of Arts on the understanding that the degree represented real mastery of a *real art* and not a head crammed with book knowledge about the ancient Greeks or about anybody or anything else. Indeed, I have often wondered that among the many benefactors of education in these days there has not been found at least

one to recognize the immense value to civilization of such a university. It would provide education not only for leisure, but for labour as well, killing the two birds with one stone.

It is a mistake, however, to suppose that creative activity has its place in leisure occupations only. The need for it is equally great in the occupations of labour, in the work of every day, in the work of the head as well as the work of the hand, and perhaps in the work of the head most of all. What kind of creativeness is more precious than *creative thinking*—in business, in economics, in politics, in international affairs, in religion? When was creative thinking so urgently needed as it is to-day? Are not our present troubles largely due to the fact that creative thinkers are so rare? The chief fault of our present methods of education is that they produce so many people whose thinking is based on hearsay, on words or on phrases, on slogans and clap-trap, and so few who can *think for themselves*. One of the best things that could happen to

your country or mine at the present moment would be the arrival of a few creative thinkers at the head of affairs. Our methods of education are largely responsible for the dearth of creative thinkers in the modern world. Our schools and colleges are doing more to suppress creativeness than to awaken it. Happily, there are some exceptions—there are progressive schools in America out of which the University of Creative Achievement may arise one of these days.

There is this hopeful thing about creativeness—if you get the creative spirit into the activities of a human being at any point it will soon spread to other points. Teach a child to play creatively in his games and he will soon begin to think creatively in his lessons. Get it into leisure and it will soon spread into labour. Get it into the fingers and it will soon find its way to the brain. Provided always that you catch the pupil young enough. If you wait till he is middle-aged and his habits have formed themselves, the creative spirit will be difficult to start,

and when started at one point will be much slower in finding its way to the others.

That is what I understand by education for leisure. It is not a separate kind of education which you add on to education for the work of life, like one of the "extras" in a boarding-school—it consists in awakening the creative spirit needed for both work and play, and catching the pupil young enough to get it into his blood and his bones, and to give time for the spread of creativeness from the point where you start it to the other points where it is needed. The problem of leisure can be solved in no other way. And the same applies to the problem of labour.

There is yet another common mistake that I must refer to. It is the notion that recreation consists only in the playing of games—golf, bridge, tennis, baseball, and all the others that are played by children and adults. Of course, recreation does include all that, but, much as I value games, I should not have undertaken my present mission if recreation consisted in them alone. There is something



more. Recreation includes all the beautiful skills, crafts, and hobbies that human beings can practise, on and up to the finest of the fine arts. I call this the Higher Recreation. You may think of music as a typical form of it, though, of course, there are a hundred others. We need playgrounds for the body, but we need also *playgrounds for the soul*, and it is in them, I think, that the most enjoyable recreation, the most delightful and lasting of leisure occupations, are to be found.

Many of the civic playgrounds and community centres that I have visited in this country, the community centres especially, combine the two types of playground in a remarkable manner. The line between play and art cannot be sharply drawn, and in good practice the two are never wholly separated. The higher values of play are, indeed, lost when it degenerates into mere "rough-and-tumble," or into a quarrelsome huggermugger or into fooling at the game, instead of playing it, with knots of loungers looking on ; and I regret to say that I have seen these very

conditions in the public playgrounds of more than one large city both in your country and in mine where there was no skilled supervision and the only guardians of the place were a few old men dressed up in uniforms and armed with sticks. But just in proportion as the play activities are directed on lines of skill, well organized on a basis of wide participation, and permeated by the spirit of human fellowship, they become a means of liberating and exercising the soul. Under these conditions the two kinds of playground become one, and the play acquires a spiritual value, though the players may not be aware of it. I have often been struck by this when watching a crowd engaged in community singing, or a group of young people playing together in an orchestra, or working out the pattern of a rhythmic dance, or playing some active game that challenged their self-control, the look on their faces telling the tale that their souls were awakened. Any playground for the body may be turned into a playground for the soul by the fine influence of a leader.

I have seen it done again and again. There is, perhaps, no vocation in which that strange power we call "personality" counts for more than in the vocation of a recreational leader, and it is a power which shows itself chiefly in the way I have described.

If you would see a playground for the soul in actual operation, pay a visit to the Graphic Sketch Club in Philadelphia, founded by Mr. Samuel Fleisher, who is one of the creative thinkers I have just been speaking of, where you may see over two thousand young men and women enjoying themselves to the top of their bent in a "playground" where work and play are married and the higher recreation is in full swing.

Skilful games are an early stage of what may become art at a higher stage. A people that plays only stupid or violent games will never be great in the arts. The wonderful art of the ancient Greeks was largely due to their fine physical culture, which they co-ordinated with the culture of the mind, and expressed in beautiful games. Their games were the

growing point of their arts. Through their physical culture and through the games they grafted on to it, in which rhythmical dancing played an important part, they learnt how to bring their bodies under the control of their intelligence, and having established skill in that fundamental form they went on from it, step by step, to the higher recreation in art and thought, not only producing works of visible beauty which are joys for ever, but creative thinkers whose wisdom is still one of our greatest treasures. Would to God we had the wisdom to follow that great example !

There is no reason why we should not do likewise. But we shall never do it so long as we think of recreation as a mere affair of playing games. We must include the higher recreation and provide for the lower recreation trained leaders who understand, as the Greeks understood, how to make the lower into the growing point of the higher. To produce such leaders would be one of the main functions of our University of Creative

Achievement, from which young men and women would go out into every school, college, and civic community to lead the people, both young and old, from the playgrounds of the body to the playgrounds of the soul. Recreation, so guided, would become one of the highest forms of human education. It would lead to a revival of the fine arts and of creative thinking and creative living in general, our efforts to promote community recreation in the playgrounds and parks, and “to give every child in the country a chance to play”—the first motto of the National Recreation Association—being only the first step towards that great consummation.

If this were better understood, our civic authorities would think twice before making recreation the first victim to be sacrificed. In these hard times I well know that sacrifices have to be made, but, taking a long view, it seems to me that recreation should not be the first victim, but the last.

Let me tell you a story to illustrate what I have been saying.

Some months ago when I was in New York I was standing one day on Fifth Avenue in company with a friend. We were looking at the Empire State Building. I told my friend what I thought of it ; I said that it appealed to me as a great work of art, a wonderful combination of mechanical science and creative imagination. My friend assented. I then asked him, " When was that building begun ? " And he gave me an answer which bewildered me at first, but which, when I came to think it over, struck me as profoundly significant. " That building," he said, " was begun *long ages ago*. It was begun when the first boy made the first mud pie and it was finished when that boy, now grown into a twentieth-century man, had been taught by mechanical science how to raise the walls of his mud pie into a thing of beauty with its head among the clouds."

## Chapter IX

### A NATIONAL COLLEGE OF RECREATIONAL CULTURE

To understand the social values that lie hidden in recreation and wait to be evoked from it under skilled leadership, we may conceive of it as passing through three stages, corresponding to the three stages under which education in general is usually classified : (a) primary or elementary ; (b) secondary or intermediate ; (c) higher or final.

(a) Primary recreation consists in physical culture, always understanding by physical culture the art of bringing the whole body under the control of the intelligence, so as to place it at the life-long disposal of the will in the normal activities of life, a thing widely different from the specialized athletic culture which fits the body for exceptional feats or occasions, such as a boat race or a prize fight. This culture should begin in childhood and be continued as long as may be necessary to

establish bodily self-control as a *habit*. It should be made accessible to every member of the community on the same terms as reading, writing, and arithmetic. Just as we regard an illiterate person who cannot read or write as cut off from the cultural values of literature, and to be pitied in consequence, so, if our eyes were open to the reality of things, we should regard the man, woman, or child who has never been taught *to control the body intelligently* as cut off from the finer uses of which the body is capable and from the joys to which such finer uses lead, and still more to be pitied than the illiterate.

(b) Physical self-control having been thus established, or at least begun, the next stage would introduce the pupil to the playground, whether natural or artificial, giving him the widest possible choice of play and encouraging him to play whatever game brought him most joy and satisfaction. It might happen that some of these games—dancing, for example—would provide the physical culture which belongs theoretically to the first stage.



In any case, the two stages would partly coincide. But the secondary stage would differ from the primary in establishing a close correlation between a universal physical culture, grounded on the nature of the body as such, and the particular games appropriate to each nation, neighbourhood, or individual. Such games, being now played by those who had acquired the elements of body control at the primary stage, would naturally tend to be played more skilfully, while some games which depend on mere violence or luck might pass out of fashion. The beauty, grace, and order which marked the games of the Greeks, but are conspicuously lacking in the games of physical illiterates, would then reappear. And since everybody, in the ideal event, would have had his primary education in body control, it might be expected that the desire to use the body in skilful and beautiful play would become more common than it now is. The number of those who want to play skilful games themselves would increase, while the crowds of physical illiterates who are content

to look on at the game as a spectacle would diminish. This might reduce the gate money, but all genuine sportsmen would rejoice in the change.

(c) It is certain that if we succeed in carrying recreational culture to the point just described we shall have to go much farther : we shall indeed be compelled to go farther by the forces we have released. All that we have done so far belongs to what might be called the Lower Recreation, but without the least disrespect implied in the word " lower," because it is only by going through that stage and making the most of its possibilities that the Higher Recreation, of which I am now to speak, can be reached. The Higher Recreation is art, from its simplest form in the manual craft or hobby, to the finest work of the musician, painter, sculptor, and architect. It is the function of the recreation leader to find the way which ascends from physical culture, through play, to the creative activities of art in all their varieties—to find that way and to lead his followers along it as far as their capac-

ities allow them to go. Some, indeed, will not be able to go all the way. They will never get farther than to become the skilful players of some worthwhile game ; though even so, they will have joy in abundance and be much nearer the Kingdom of Heaven than when they started on the road. But if the recreation leader understands his business and has free scope to try out his methods, he will surely find, among the millions of children who now throng the primary schools and go out from them with their creative aptitudes unawakened, and with little else awakened that will make their life worth living—he will find, I say, among these millions unsuspected thousands and tens of thousands who can be led on stage by stage to the world of Higher Recreation, where the deepest joys of life are waiting for them.

Nor is the Higher Recreation a realm of enjoyment only ; nor is the prospect of the enjoyment it affords the only motive for seeking it and for guiding the young along the path that leads to it. Beyond all that, it is a

realm where intelligence is vitalized, character ennobled, and real values created. Those who spend their leisure in the Higher Recreation will find that deeper meaning in recreation which is suggested, as I have pointed out before, by pronouncing the word *re-creation*, though I would not deny that the lower recreation, if skilfully practised, will have the same effect, but in a minor degree. Their leisure, instead of being spent in the wasteful consumption of goods and services, with no fruit to show beyond the dull folly, meaningless “thrills” or pernicious excitements which characterize so many “pleasure” resorts and places of popular amusement, a state of things as economically unsound as it is humanly enfeebling—their leisure, I say, instead of being spent in these unproductive ways, will now be spent productively in creating things of use, beauty, and excellence which rejoice and benefit their neighbours, raise the standards of value in the community, and make the art of living more practicable for all men. In this way the leisure of those

who practise the Higher Recreation will become a positive contribution to the real wealth of the world instead of being an exhausting drain on its resources.

We might confidently expect also that around leisure occupations of this higher character there would grow up industries of corresponding kinds for supplying the goods and services needful, just as now we have a multitude of industries—the manufacture of cosmetics, for example—which are just as unproductive, in the ultimate analysis, as the unproductive leisure to which they minister. I cannot but think that under these conditions the economics of the world would be on a sounder basis. Is not the present depression of trade due in no small degree to what the older economists used to call “unproductive expenditure”? And are not “unproductive expenditure” and “unproductive leisure” almost two names for the same thing? And in view of the fact that the total amount of leisure at the disposal of industrial societies is rapidly increasing, owing to causes

previously mentioned, is not the economic outcome dark indeed if this vast amount of work-free time continues to be spent, as so much leisure is being spent now, in the amusements of a fool's paradise? Never was the saying of the Chinese sage so obviously true as it is to-day, that whether a civilization will live or die depends on the way it spends its leisure.

Putting all these considerations together, it seems to me that a very cogent case can now be presented for the foundation, in every civilized country, of a National College of Recreational Culture.

It is to be noted in the first place that the process of guiding recreation from its beginning in physical culture, through the secondary stage of play, to the creative activities of the Higher Recreation, and so converting recreation into the kind of education needed by skill-hungry human beings—this process, though clearly possible and urgently called for, is at present imperfectly understood, or,

to be more exact, is understood by relatively few persons. But there are enough of them to furnish the nucleus of a faculty for our college. And, to anticipate what I will presently enlarge upon, the establishment of this nucleus would be the first step towards the solution of that problem of leisure which existing universities, with their too frequent stress on vocational training, are doing little or nothing to promote, but much to hinder. Here, too, would be the beginning of the "University of Creative Achievement" spoken of in the last chapter, though that name might be held in reserve until the project were developed. Enough if we call it, to begin with, the National College of Recreational Culture.

The general function of our college would be to study and apply all means and methods by which the forces, desires, motives, and interests now largely running to waste in meaningless amusement, pernicious excitement and the degenerate sportsmanship of the side lines, can be turned in the direction

which runs through the successive stages of skill to the higher accomplishment of beautiful play, and thence onward to the final stage of creative achievement. In other words, and using a figure, the function of our college would be to find the pathway, well known to the Greeks, but lost in modern educational systems, which leads from the playground of the *body* to the playground of the *soul*; to find it, and having found it, to train recreation leaders who shall be available for every school, college, and civic community. Or, using briefer language, the function of our college would be to co-ordinate recreation with culture, and to combine them in the education of the whole man for the art of living.

Our college would cover a wide range of studies and promote research in many directions that would challenge the ability of the student. Both study and research would be, in part, sociological. In this department particular attention would be devoted to the art—perhaps the most precious art in the world



—*by which crowds can be turned into communities.* All the means of doing this would be reviewed from their simplest forms, such as community singing or community games, to their more difficult forms in the discipline of an orchestra or a rhythmic dance ; all games being reckoned good which promote the community spirit, and all evil which destroy or debase it.

Instead of lecturing people on “ the relation of the individual to the social whole,” or exhorting them to change their anti-social hearts into social ones, which no son of man ever succeeded in doing merely because he had been exhorted to do it—in place of these futile methods of promoting the community spirit, these new leaders would set about it in the only way in which it can be done, by getting people together in the joyous co-operation of beautiful activity and by making a full use of every type of recreation which offered an opportunity for turning a crowd into a community.

In this way, if a glance into the future may

be permitted, a real foundation might be laid for that far-off divine event, dreamed of by many, when the nations of the world, now a "crowd" in their mutual relations, will become a community of nations; an event never to be brought about by mere preachings of the community ideal.

Something short of this—far short of it, indeed, but yet pointing towards it—has already been accomplished in the recreational field. No greater educational discovery was ever made than when Baden-Powell conceived the idea of utilizing the play instinct of boys, their love of adventure, their devilry, and their aptitude for getting into mischief as a means of training them in courage, competence, self-control, self-respect, loyalty, discipline, responsibility, and welding them on that basis into a world-wide community. The art of turning a crowd into a community by use of the recreational method, and so converting recreation into the finest education imaginable, has no more telling example than the Scout movement.

And this is the art which our National College would study, acquire, foster, and apply. The international values of recreation remain to be explored. Our college would explore them.

Involved in this art and essential to its practice on the recreational field, would be the devising of methods of *competition* more conducive to the team spirit (which, of course, is only another name for the community spirit) and more effective than the methods now in vogue, such as those which have been worked out and carried into effect with great success by Commander Coote in Britain. Attention would be given, for the purpose of reforming it, to the evil tendency, now prevalent in schools and colleges and athletic circles in general, to concentrate the interest of sport on the performance of star teams of expert players, the aristocracy of the game, and to make competition consist in gladiatorial combats between these groups of specialists, presented as public spectacles and often conducted on a commercial basis for the sake of the gate money they produce. The

new method of competition would aim at what I have elsewhere called the "democratization of sport"—*i.e.* at converting it from a public spectacle performed by the aristocrats of the game, with a crowd, possibly of physical illiterates, looking on from the side lines and yelling for the victors, into a community occupation based upon *participation* rather than spectatorship. Into the technique of the new methods I have here no space to enter. Suffice it to say that their general principle would be to give credit for *effort* rather than for success, thereby providing the weakest player with a motive for doing his best and a chance of rising into the higher ranks, so that every player, like the common soldier in Napoleon's army, might think of himself as "carrying a marshal's bâton in his knapsack." In this way the significance of the game would consist, as true sportsmanship requires it to consist, more in the quality of the play as represented by the total efforts of the group and less in victory or defeat, which are often mere accidents.

In connexion with all this the students of our college would be largely occupied in the great and fundamental question of correlating the culture of the body with the culture of the mind—a correlation which may be summarily described as the “co-education of mind and body.” In place of the one-sided or, rather, lopsided athletic culture which trains the body for temporary occasions or exceptional feats and is often followed by relapse, the effort would now be to provide the body with a *liberal education* for its normal activities, teaching it to perform all these with the minimum of effort, strain, and fatigue, and with the maximum of dignity, self-control, and power of adaptation to changing conditions, which is precisely parallel to what a liberal education of the mind should aim at in the intellectual field. The two cultures would thus be brought into a relation of mutual support, and a basis laid in the culture of the body for that creative thinking which is the highest mark of an educated human being. To effect this object, games of

physical skill would be freely made use of in connexion with whatever corrective or positive disciplines might be best suited to the object in view.

At all points of their training the students of our college—our future recreational leaders—would be occupied with the practice of these things as well as with the theory of them. They would graduate in physical culture, not on the ground of their book knowledge of its technique, but by demonstrating that they were masters of their own bodies. Masters of Art in that sense. Our women graduates, for the recreational leaders of the future will be women as often as men, will “satisfy the examiners” by their actual skill in bodily self-management; for example, by the degree of resemblance they show to Virgil’s goddess, who revealed her divinity to the startled eyes of Æneas by the *majesty of her walk*. The men will comply with similar tests. Both will be masters of poise, balance, rhythm, economy. None will be asked to run a mile in record time, but all will be required

*to think with their whole bodies*, to use their bodies as instruments of intelligence, and to show the staying power which comes from command over themselves. And, in addition to all these fundamental things, none will receive his diploma until he has acquired proficiency in one, at least, of the specialized arts—and there are scores of them—which constitute the higher recreation or world of skill. A master of some craft our graduate must be, from the manual crafts of the potter, weaver, carpenter, gardener, to the finer arts of the imagination—music, drama, painting, sculpture, and the rest. So equipped, our graduate will go forth to play his part as a recreational leader in the new education which leads on stage by stage, from the making of mud pies to creative thinking and the art of life. What finer profession has the world to offer to men and women of good ability and wholesome ideals? I can imagine that our college, once fairly launched, would be besieged by applicants.

The social value of such a profession, and

of interfusing its work with the general system of education, would be far-reaching. There is no type of " leadership " more vitally needed at the present day than that which our college would train and equip.

It remains to be pointed out that a National Recreation School, founded and supported by the National Recreation Association of America, already exists in New York. The dream outlined above would be fulfilled by the development of this admirable beginning into a fully equipped institution, independent of existing universities, but not antagonistic to them, supported on a nationwide basis and free of all political influences.



## Chapter x

### DAMAGED HUMANITY

As I travel from city to city my American friends often ask me to give them my impressions of what I observe. This I am not very eager to do, for three reasons. First and chiefly, because I suspect that some of my impressions are wrong and would have to be corrected on closer study of the facts. Second, because such of my impressions as might happen to be right would probably repeat what my American friends know already and better than I do. Third, because in my travels about this country I prefer the rôle of a learner to that of a critic, and the more so in view of the abundant kindness which meets me in every city I visit. My chief impression, indeed, is of that. And I am reasonably sure that, however many of my other impressions may be wrong, I have a right impression that Americans are a singularly warm-hearted people.

I will venture to add a few others con-

nected with the general subject of this book. Even though they may only repeat what my American readers know already, their repetition by a visitor from the Old World may have a little interest of its own.

And first as to the recreation movement itself. Though nobody in his senses could claim that the recreation movement is a cure for economic depression, I have seen much which convinces me that it is helping multitudes of people all over the country out of the depression of spirits incident to their economic troubles. In such times as these it seems to me of the utmost importance to keep the flame of joy burning wherever and whenever we can. 'Tis the recreation movement is doing, not indeed to the extent of turning this troubled world into a Paradise, but to the extent of saving thousands of men and women from falling into the miseries of stagnation. In shelters for the unemployed, in public playgrounds, in community centres, I have seen the flame of joy burning brightly, and heard from the lips of both men and women

testimonies not a few to the work of heroic recreational leaders who have helped them to forget their troubles and keep hope alive. My impression at this point is that such work was never more urgently needed than now.

Another impression is this. As I walk the streets of your cities and study the faces and figures of the crowds on the sidewalks, I see a thing which I have often observed with alarm in the great cities of my own country. I see a large amount, an alarmingly large amount, of what I can only call *damaged humanity*—men, women, and children whose appearance clearly denotes that they are living woefully inadequate lives, inadequate physically, to begin with, and with all the mental and moral inadequacies that follow from that. Damaged humanity is the peculiar product of life in great cities. In its totality it constitutes an enormous bad debt on the books of society, and if allowed to go on unchecked may ultimately prove the bankruptcy of civilization, as Oswald Spengler predicts it will, for not even a revolution

can attain its object if damaged humanity is the material it works with. 'These people may not be poor, nor ill clad, nor positively sick, but they impress me as *biologically degenerate*, and I recall statistics published in the works of American writers as to the prevalence of this biologically degenerate condition in the great population of the cities. 'The impression deepens as I pass from the crowds in the better streets—the Fifth Avenues and the Michigan Avenues—to the back regions and the slums. Here I see multitudes, especially women and children, who are visibly decaying as human beings. Hard indeed is the task of those who would save their souls or introduce them to mental culture or build them up into good citizens. And I find myself repeating these good old lines from Goldsmith's "Deserted Village":

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates and men decay.

If we cannot undo this damage in the adult, let us do what we can to prevent it in children.

I recall an occasion in Philadelphia when I was conducted, by one who knows them well, through the worst slums of that city. We arrived at a dismal region of courts and alleys, festering, sunless, and rotten. Passing through one of these alleys, which might have served as the entrance into Dante's Hell ("Abandon hope, all ye who enter here"), we came to a small open space between the tenements, perhaps fifty feet square, where a group of children—thirty or forty of them—were making pathetic attempts at play amid the mess and rubbish of a demolished house. They were mere wrecks of children, stunted, rickety, deformed and devitalized, their young bodies stamped with the marks of suffering, and many of their faces, which might have been beautiful, wearing an expression of malignity which betokened the criminal-to-be and reminded me of the expression that Hogarth painted on the faces of wicked old men. As I studied these children a fierce hatred of civilization burned in my heart. But I felt the force of the first

motto of the National Recreation Association—"that every child in America shall be given a chance to play"—and was glad that I was in Philadelphia to plead for that cause.

With this I will contrast two contrary impressions.

I was in a large neighbourhood playground on the East Side of New York, where perhaps a thousand children just turned out of school were at play under skilful and unobtrusive supervision. It was a joyous and exhilarating scene. Without a single exception that I could find, the children looked healthy, happy, and spotlessly clean. I was struck by the beauty of many of them. I think they were mostly the children of foreign immigrants, and I said to my companion that if I were a painter of children in the Golden Age I would go to that playground to find my models.

On a later occasion I was in Hull House in Chicago—associated with the immortal name of Jane Addams. Here were boys and girls already busy with the higher recreation, for

which many children who have no aptitude for active games show an instinct almost as soon as they can stand on their feet, an instinct which develops into positive hunger when they reach adolescence. My attention was especially attracted by a group of Italian boys who were modelling objects freely created by their own fancy, and as I watched their deft and delicate fingers at work, I could not feel that America was much to be pitied for her foreign population. Here, I said to myself, is the material out of which a revival of the fine arts will come, one day, to this land. And I was glad that fate had brought me to Chicago to plead for the higher recreation and to see the work of Jane Addams.

The next impression I would record is of a more general kind. In every city I visit—and I have visited more than sixty—I am conscious that a fierce and terrible struggle for mastery is going on between the best elements in the life of that city and the worst. Everywhere I see this battle between the best and

the worst swaying backwards and forwards, victory inclining now to this side and now to that. Everywhere I see the opposing elements locked together in a kind of mortal combat—never standing idle side by side and merely gazing into one another's eyes, but always fiercely and definitely at war and, as it were, grappling each other by the throat. It is a battle of giants and no man knows what the issue will be, though some of us have our hopes. The same battle, of course, is going on all over the world, but in America I think one is more acutely conscious of it than elsewhere, and more disposed to say (as I have often publicly said in these cities) that whether our civilization is moving towards the earthly paradise or towards the bottomless pit, it seems likely that America will get there first. And as I have watched this mortal combat between the Best and the Worst, swaying backwards and forwards almost visibly under one's eyes, there has often come back to my mind a fine saying that I learned from Thomas Carlyle—"Strengthen the opposite of that which is



too strong.” That the worst is too strong in your cities, there can be no doubt. But it avails little to speculate on the issue of the combat. It avails much to throw our weight on to the right side, *to strengthen the opposite of that which is too strong*. I think the recreation movement is doing this and will do it far more effectively when the idea of education through recreation has taken possession of the public mind, as one day it undoubtedly will. It will strengthen the opposite of that which is too strong to the point perhaps of deciding the issue. But the battle will be hard and long and many will get hurt before it is finished.

My fourth impression has to do with the temper of the American democracy.

There is a well-established maxim in the practice of war that a powerful enemy, occupying a strongly entrenched position, should never be attacked directly from the front so long as a possibility exists of getting round his flanks and taking him from the rear. The neglect of this rule during the

Great War by incompetent commanders involved the most frightful losses to the Allies and all but gave the victory to the other side. The same maxim applies, I have come to think, in the war against social evil of all kinds. But, unless I am much mistaken, there is an element of impatience in the American temperament (though not confined to Americans) which demands quick results and leads them to prefer the smashing tactics of the direct attack to the slower manœuvres of the encircling movement. An outstanding instance of this (which I am not otherwise concerned to discuss) is Prohibition--the attempt to smash the drink power by the direct method of legislative repression. And recent discussions seem to show a widespread belief in the country that the present economic depression could be ended by similar methods, by legislative short-cuts to prosperity.

This preference for the method of direct attack often shows itself, again, as an exaggerated estimate of the efficacy of propaganda. The idea is that if you denounce an evil long

enough and eloquently enough you will break its power, and that if you proclaim a truth with sufficient vociferation you will establish its practice.

My own experience, strongly confirmed by my observations in the United States, leads me to think that truths never get themselves established by propaganda, and that social evils never yield to it, unless the propaganda is backed by patient education. Education, rightly understood, is a vast encircling movement cast round the entrenched armies of social evil. I have long rejected the belief, which I once held, that good ideas get themselves carried out in the life of a community by virtue of some inner potency which truth is supposed to possess. I now perceive that they get themselves carried out only when there is enough *collective discipline* to ensure co-operation, and continuous co-operation on a great scale ; when, in other words, the leader is not only there to lead, but the disciplined host ready to follow. Under the rule of tyrants and dictators such collective dis-

cipline can be *enforced*, at least for a time, though it usually breaks down when the pressure of the tyrant's will ceases to act, at his death or assassination. In a democracy the discipline *must grow from within* and be willing and spontaneous ; but discipline of some kind there must be if decisive common action is to result or a great crisis be boldly met. Under present conditions such discipline is seldom forthcoming. As George Santayana has recently said, the great defect of the public mind to-day is precisely *the lack of discipline*. I believe this to be true. And my impression is that the democratic mind of the United States is even more undisciplined than that of any other democratic country I am acquainted with. Not that the others have much to boast of in this respect.

And yet I fear that very little good will result from pointing out the lack of discipline in modern democracy unless appropriate education can be devised for getting the spirit of discipline into the blood and bones of the

people and establishing it as a social habit. I have faith that the kind of education recommended in this book, education through recreation, will contribute to that result. The team spirit, for which the field of recreation affords so many growing points, is only another name for the spontaneous discipline which democracy stands in need of, and for which enforced discipline is the worst of substitutes. I feel sure that recreation, developed on educational lines, has a great service to render in that direction. It is a hopeful method of turning the flank of democracy's greatest enemy. The name of the enemy is—indiscipline.

## Chapter XI

### A RECAPITULATION<sup>1</sup>

THE recreation movement, represented in this country by the National Recreation Association of America, aims at uniting two things which have become separated in the modern world—recreation and education. We want to make the recreations of the people, both children and grown-ups, more educational than they now are ; and we want to give education some of the interest and the joy that belongs to recreation. If we can do that two results will follow ; first, recreation will become far more enjoyable than it now is : and second, education will become far more effective in building up a fine and noble race of citizenry. I will give you a motto which explains in a sentence what we are aiming at —“ Education and recreation, united they stand ; divided they fall.” Or a shorter motto

<sup>1</sup> Broadcast from Chicago, April 24, 1932, Columbia Broadcasting System.

still—"Let us have more joy in life." We think that a vast increase of human joy can be brought about by uniting education and recreation. And if we get more joy we shall get more of other things that are sadly wanted ; more music ; more clean conduct ; more good fellowship ; more community spirit ; more beautiful cities ; and more value in our social life. I think that if we could get more joy into life we should soon see a great revival of all the fine arts, and perhaps a revival of trade as well. I feel sure that will happen if we succeed in uniting recreation and education.

We should never forget that recreation includes something more than the playing of games. It includes the skills, the crafts, the arts, like music, the drama and many others, which all human beings are capable of acquiring in one form or another, if they were rightly educated. These arts and crafts and skills provide the most enjoyable kinds of recreation. All human beings are *hungry for skill*, for some kind of creative activity in

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which they can express themselves, and are never happy and contented till that hunger is appeased. I think our educational systems are much to blame for having neglected that side of human nature, spending too much time in loading young people with book knowledge, and too little on awakening the creative side of them.

The recreation movement is trying to remedy that great defect. We want to reform education so as to give a much larger place to creative activity in the training of both children and adults. There is a vast amount of undeveloped skill waiting for education to bring it into action, with an immense increase in the joy and value of life to follow. I have seen it done in many progressive schools. And a few weeks ago I saw in one of your great cities a crowd of unemployed, some thousands of them, who have been turned into a contented community by the skilful work of one man who had got them interested in worth-while recreational activities. They had previously given a lot of trouble



and broken out into a riot. But the leader had changed all that by finding something for them to do which satisfied their hunger for skill, and by getting them to do it all together. He saw that providing them with food and shelter was not enough. You must provide them also with *something to do*, something they feel to be worth while, as a means to occupy the enforced leisure in which they find themselves. Many of our social troubles could be cured in the same way if we had leaders who understood the art of turning recreation into education. The problem of leisure largely turns on that. The reason so many people don't know what to do with their leisure time, and spend it in all kinds of dull folly, is that the creative part of them was never awakened when they were young.

Another result that will surely follow from uniting recreation with education is the diminution of crime. All criminologists are now agreed that crime is largely the result of thwarting the natural play instincts of the young human being. It begins as juvenile

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delinquency and develops later into adult crime of a more dangerous kind. Here is an interesting fact that has been brought to my notice in many cities of the United States. I find that the figures for juvenile delinquency tend to be lowest in those parts of the city which are nearest to a well-organized playground, or where opportunities are given young people for practising the arts and crafts ; and the figures tend to be highest in those other parts of the city which are so far away from the playgrounds and the craft schools that the young people can't get to them. If juvenile crime can be prevented in that way, all sorts of crime will be diminished.

I wonder if the public is wise enough to see the significance of that. Does it see that by spending a few millions on educational recreation it can save uncounted millions which it is now spending on courts, gaols, hospitals and asylums for the insane ? This recreation movement, as I understand it, is a great work of preventive social medicine. The social

evils it prevents are disease, crime, vice, folly, and bad citizenship in general. Prevention is better than cure and vastly cheaper in the long run. I believe the recreation movement will become in a few years one of the outstanding national movements of the time.

The great need at present is for competent leaders. Turning recreation into education needs careful study and skilful handling. Every country ought to have its own College of Recreational Culture—you might call it a school of leisure-craft—like the one they have had for many years in Sweden, where young men and women of good ability can get themselves thoroughly trained and go out as recreational educators into every school, college, and civic community in the land. A new profession is waiting in that field for the best type of young men and women to take up, and I am glad to say that in my own country not a few are beginning to do so. As a hint in vocational guidance I will say this to the young men and women who may be listening to me—does not the vocation of

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a recreational educator provide an opening suited to the ideals that you cherish and to the talents you possess ?

People often ask me for advice as to the best mode of spending their leisure time. The only advice I have now time to give is this : the more of your leisure you can spend in creative activity, in skilful and beautiful exertion, the more you will enjoy it and the more good it will do you. In that way your recreation will become your education.

I beg you once more not to think of recreation as though it consisted only of playing games. Remember always that other part of it—the arts, the crafts, and the skills. Think of music as a typical recreational art ; though there are many others. Games and sports are, of course, included in our programme ; they are the natural starting point for education on recreational lines.

There is, however, one form of sportsmanship which we don't think it necessary to encourage, that of merely looking on from the side lines while the game is played by selected

teams of professional experts. We are not opposed to that, but we are not contented with it. We want to persuade as many people as possible to play the game themselves, to play some game, instead of merely paying gate money to see a combat between experts—a state of things which leads to the commercialization of sport. Participation rather than spectatorship is our object. I sometimes call it the democratization of sport, “of the people, by the people, and for the people,” like government, in contrast to the kind of sport where all the interest centres on the performance of a few big guns—the aristocrats of the game. For example, how much better it is to have in your city a fine municipal golf course where the people play golf in their hundreds, than to produce a champion who can beat the champion from another city. *The democratization of sport.* There are few better ways of creating a community spirit than by getting the people together on the ground of manly sports and skilful games. But let us get them together,

## A RECAPITULATION

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not as crowds that look on, but as groups that play with one another. I count that one of the most important means of social education. It turns the playground into a community centre and, when once we have got to that point, the arts and the crafts, which are the high forms of recreation, can easily be put on the same footing, so that in course of time our playground for the body may become a playground for the soul—a place where people can find something to do which satisfies their hunger for skill—which all of us want and are never satisfied until we get.

Beneath all the problems that trouble us to-day, both industrial and economic, there is one great and fundamental problem we must never lose sight of. It is the problem of keeping up a high quality both of body and mind in the mass of the people. If the human quality goes down, those other problems are bound to go from bad to worse. If the human quality goes up, those other problems will tend to solve themselves. In all the great cities of America I see forces at work which

are causing damage to both the bodies and the minds of the people who live in them, especially to the young. The same thing is happening in the cities of the Old World. But counteracting forces are happily at work also. One of the most effective is the movement for providing the people with more and better recreation.

THE END





